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Palestinian Affairs

PLO Rejects 'All' Settlement Initiatives

JN2308164991 Sanaa Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1600 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] Brother Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine and chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, asserted the PLO's rejection of all initiatives that have been put forward in the recent weeks to achieve a political settlement of the Palestinian question.

The Tunisian newspaper AL-SHURUQ today cited brother Yasir 'Arafat as asserting, during the meeting of the Fatah Revolutionary Council which concluded its meetings in Tunis yesterday, that the PLO adheres to the declared Palestinian positions, primarily the Palestinian people's right to repatriation, self-determination, and the establishment of their independent state with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

Abu-Mazin Says 'No Settlement' Without Jerusalem

LD2408142691 Rabat MAP in Arabic 0900 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Rabat, 24 Aug (MAP)—Abu-Mazin, PLO Executive Committee member, has stressed that there can be no settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict without Jerusalem and the return of this city, especially the holy places, to Arab sovereignty. In an interview with the Moroccan ANOUAL published 23 August, he said that the issue of Jerusalem is at the forefront of the disagreement between the PLO and the United States, in addition to the form of Palestinian representation at the peace conference on the Middle East. He added that, without the Palestinians, the conference on Middle East peace could not be held, because it would solve nothing.

Concerning Palestinian national unity, the Palestinan official said that this unity existed, and that internal differences do not influence in the least the total sum of the struggle of the Palestinian groups against the occupation. He pointed out that the Hamas movement and other Palestinian groups had been invited to participate in the Palestine National Council.

Abu-Mazin confirmed that the Palestinian people's intifadah against occupation would continue, despite the loss of Arab support in the aftermath of the Gulf war. After he highlighted the importance of the Arab Maghreb countries' support for the Palestinian cause, he pointed out that the relations between the PLO and Egypt had begun to normalize, although they had not reached the desired level. He emphasized that Egypt understands many issues of the Palestinian attitude to the peace conference, such as the issue of Jerusalem, its representation, and the issue of settlements.

'Abd-Rabbuh Rejects Current Conference 'Formula'

JN2608081791 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 26 Aug 91 pp 1, 13

[By Sa'd al-Silawi]

[Text] PLO Executive Committee Member Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh announced that agreement was reached during the Jordanian-Palestinian discussions chaired by His Majesty King Husayn for the Jordanian side, and President Yasir 'Arafat for the Palestinian side, to form a joint Jordanian-Palestinian committee tasked with following up the Jordanian-Palestinian coordination on the subject of peace and the proposed conference.

In an interview with SAWT AL-SHA'B, Mr. 'Abd-Rabbuh added that this coordination committee is tasked with obtaining better Jordanian-Palestinian guarantees.

On his evaluation of the meetings on the first day of discussions between His Majesty King Husayn and President 'Arafat, the member of the PLO Executive Committee and the Palestinian delegation to the talks described the meeting as very positive. He said that talks with his majesty the king were very deep and dealt with various options and the previous political march. We found that our stands are the same over various major points. Jordan and the PLO understand the need to have appropriate conditions to convene the peace conference based on the resolutions of international legitimacy. Jordan and the PLO also agree to continue joint coordination, which could take place within the framework of the two sides' joint action committee, especially as the coming days and weeks will be decisive for political progress.

Mr. 'Abd-Rabbuh said that the PLO has so far not said its last word on what has been termed the peace conference.

He added that all results reached through direct Palestinian-American contacts or through our Arab contacts will be presented to the Palestine National Council so it can decide what the Palestinian stand will be and what our firm and decisive options are. He said: I can now say that we cannot accept the current formula for the peace conference. It is a formula that does not provide us with anything but accepting the occupation and giving it legitimacy.

Mr. 'Abd-Rabbuh said we in the PLO demand real guarantees that the peace conference will result in full withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian territories, foremost of which is Jerusalem. We also demand that settlements be stopped immediately. If negotiations last for many years and settlements are not stopped in the meantime, we will not find anything to negotiate about at the end of the political process. In addition, the United States should clearly show commitment to us and to the other Arab sides regarding these issues, and there should be recognition of the Palestinian people's rights to self-determination. This is a holy right. We are witnessing a large-scale collapse around the world, all of which is taking place under the slogan of self-determination. The United States supports dividing the Soviet Union and the separation of a number of republics from the Union in the name of self-determination. At the same time, it denies the Palestinian people this right.

We say, therefore, that our options have not yet been defined, and we are waiting to see what answers we get on these issues.

Mr. 'Abd-Rabbuh did not consider the forming of a coordination committee, whose members have not yet been appointed, as a new step in the full sense of the word. There was coordination and discussion between us in the previous stage. This coordination will resume. Together, we will follow up all the proposed issues including that of providing guarantees and appropriate conditions until a decision is reached proceeding from these issues on whether we will or will not participate. This committee is for following up on coordination. One of its tasks is to follow up political developments and the stands of the various parties.

Responding to a question on the participating delegation, Mr. 'Abd-Rabbuh said that there is no dispute at all between us and Jordan. We understand one other, and our stands are united. Our argument is with the vague U.S. stand, which almost meets the Israeli conditions.

Continuing his response, Mr. 'Abd-Rabbuh said: We still believe that convening a quadripartite Arab meeting and a comprehensive Arab meeting is a necessity, because we also want to have an Arab commitment that they will not go along with the two-track approach, which is the American and Israeli conception of this plan. In other words, we want the Arabs to pledge that no normalization of relations can take place before Israel withdraws from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories. This is a basic and vital issue, and we believe that a number of Arab countries understand it well, especially the Arab Maghreb countries which have been called on to participate in the peace conference.

He said: What we have heard from the four parties, including Jordan, is that they have no objections to holding the meeting that Jordan had approved from the very start. In fact, it even contributed its support toward holding the quadripartite meeting, whose date has not yet been fixed.

Fatah Revolutionary Council Issues Communique

LD2308225191 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] Brothers, from 19 to 20 August the Fatah Revolutionary Council held its fifth ordinary session of meetings. The agenda contained a number of points, including internal, organizational, and political affairs.

The council opened its proceedings by standing and reading Koranic verses for the souls of the martyrs. The brother commander general praised the memory of the martyr Colonel Hawwari who was martyred during the period between the council's two sessions.

The Revolutionary Council heard a report by its secretariat and revised the resolutions of the previous session and [words indistinct] the implementation of those resolutions.

Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat], the brother commander general, submitted a detailed and comprehensive report on the current political situation. Brother Abu-al-Lutf [Faruq Qaddumi], secretary of the Central Committee, submitted the Central Committee's report. Several members of the Central Committee then spoke, each in his own specialist field. Later the council heard the interpolation of its members in a debate on the Central Committee's report which focused on the political situation and peace moves in the region.

The council adopted a number of resolutions on the organizational and operational situation, the support and escalation of the glorious intifadah, and backing for the steadfastness of our people inside the occupied homeland. The election of the required number of officials for the finance audit committee took place.

At the end of its session, the Revolutionary Council decided to issue the following statement:

In this new phase, our heroic Palestinian people and our vanguard movement are increasingly facing methods of political and economic blockade and attempts to liquidate their cause and national rights. These attempts have reached [words indistinct] in occupied Jerusalem, [word indistinct], and Lebanon. They coincide with the U.S. move following the Gulf war to exploit the results of the war and initiate regional arrangements that constitute a reflection of the new world order, and demonstrate the bias of the U.S. stance toward Israel and its double standards in dealing with international legitimacy in the Gulf and Palestine. That is clearly demonstrated through the ideas and perceptions adopted by the U.S. Administration regarding the peace process. These [word indistinct] in a biased way in the peace conference and its bilateral course that would resolve the problems between Arab countries and Israel and leave the Palestine issue suspended. There would be no certainties regarding a final resolution that would secure the Palestinian people's legitimate rights, including the right to return, self-determination, and the establishment of their own independent Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital.

All this is taking place within the framework of the policy of settlements and the establishment of more settlements, the confiscation of land, continued immigration, acts of aggression against holy places in Jerusalem, attempts to Judaize Jerusalem, and plots to exclude it from the talks.

In addition to these measures, the Israeli authorities have been putting forward conditions which reflect their determination not to abandon their occupation. The United States has championed these conditions as expressed in the messages exchanged between Bush and Shamir. This proves its lack of desire for a just, lasting peace. In the face of this stance and these events and out of our adherence to our Palestinian constants and those of the movement, the Revolutionary Council declares the following:

1. On the level of a political settlement: Any cooperation with the efforts to stage a peace conference must stem from the following established bases:
a. The guaranteeing of the complete withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including Jerusalem.
b. Jerusalem is the capital of our independent Palestinian state and no settlement of the conflict in the area can be achieved without the solution of the problem of Jerusalem in accordance with these established bases.
c. The guaranteeing of the halting of the policy of settlements and the solution of the problem of the existence of settlements, on the ground that they constitute part of the aggression and of the occupation and its consequences.
. The guaranteeing of the right of return and self-determination for the Palestinian people and their right to establish their independent state as a prelude to the formation of a confederatioan with Jordan, on the basis of free and voluntary choice of the two fraternal peoples in accordance with the resolutions of our national assemblies.
e. The PLO's right to represent the Palestinian people, wherever they may be, on an acceptable and equal basis with the other parties.

2. On the Palestinian level: The Palestine Revolutionary Council salutes with appreciation the steadfastness of our struggling Palestinian people in our occupied homeland and their firm stand in struggle and sacrifice, their adherence to the homeland, and their offering of more martyrs, wounded, and steadfast detainees inside the camps of occupation. The Revolutionary Council states the following:
a. The continuation of the struggle and resistance against the occupation in all forms, the escalation of the struggle and resistance, and the devising of new and effective means for continuing the blessed intifadah and safeguarding its escalating methods, until the occupation is ended, our homeland is liberated, and our independent state, with Jerusalem as its capital, is established.
b. Consolidating Palestinian national unity in all its forms among the masses of our people, such as its national forces, and working toward strengthening the links of such forces within the democratic framework through the PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.
c. The importance of convening the Palestinian National Council in this sensitive period for our region in order to formulate PLO policy for the next phase.
d. Showing attachment to the violated rights of the sons of our Palestinian people in Lebanon, working to solve the problems of their civil existence, ensuring their political, social, and employment rights, and securing the protection of the Palestinian camps under the umbrella of Lebanon's sovereignty and unity.
e. Working to solve the problems of the sons of our Palestinian people who were expelled from Kuwait and who have been subjected to persecution, pursuit, homelessness, and the denial of their rights at the hands of the Kuwaiti authorities and armed gangs; calling on the United Nations and its specialized institutions to protect them and secure their rights, and on the Arab League and its member states to provide opportunities for work, residence, and stability for them.
f. Working to strengthen the links of unity among, and attachment to, the communities of the Palestinian people in the diaspora, helping them preserve their inheritance of national and nationalist consciousness.
g. The importance of Palestinian commitment to and support for the PLO, the sole and legitimate representative of the Plaestinian people, and leader of the march of its struggle. This has manifested itself through the practice and commitment of our masses inside and their national institutions and personalities, especially those who held meetings with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and the U.S. Administration.

The Revolutionary Council is anxious to register this integration and commitment in national performance as demonstrated in those meetings and in those Palestinian moves and their impact on the strength, constancy, and unity of the Palestinian stance.

3. On the Arab level, the Revolutionary Council, out of its awareness of the perils that surround the Arab nation—especially those countries around Palestine—as a result of the Zionist aggression and the imbalance of power in its favor, attaches special importance to the need to restore Arab confrontation of those perils, to prevent the enemy from benefiting from Arab disputes, and to prevent the Arabs from making gratuitous concessions resulting from a lack of coordination or cooperation.

For that reason, the Revolutionary Council stresses the following essentials:
a. The need to clear the Arab atmosphere, achieve Arab solidarity, and return inter-Arab relations to their normal course. Relations between Arab countries and the PLO must also be restored in a way liable to serve the interest of the Arab nation and its central cause, Palestine.
b. The coordination of efforts should be urged among Arab states, including the PLO, through a five-party meeting and at the various levels in order to coordinate the stance on the efforts being made under the heading of moves for regional peace.
c. All forms of blockade on the Palestinian people must be lifted, wherever they may be taking place, especially in the occupied territories. The blockade on the fraternal people of Iraq, designed to starve its people and children, should also be ended, as should the attempt to impose tutelage on it and shackle it in various ways so as to

dominate it, together with the Arab nation and its resources, and threaten Arab national security.
d. Institutions of the masses in the Arab homeland should be promoted in order to support the Palestinian struggle, consolidate the intifadah, revive the participating Arab front, and speed up the construction of the popular Arab front for the support of the intifadah and the establishment of country committees in the various Arab countries and special committees for supporting the question of honorable Jerusalem, liberating it, and preserving its Arab character.

4. On the international level: The Fatah Revolutionary Council stresses the need for the implementation of international legitimacy. It assesses all the efforts being made to attain peace in our region on the basis of the extent of its response to that legitimacy which was embodied in all the UN resolutions relating to the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict. Thus, proceeding from this view, the Revolutionary Council:
a. Asserts the need for an active UN role in the march of peace in the Middle East and in the protection of the Palestinian people and the securing of their legitimate national rights.
b. Expresses appreciation for the stance of the Islamic states embodied in the resolutions of the Islamic Conference Organization meeting in Istanbul. It also expresses appreciation for the stances of the African states at the Organization of African Unity conference held in Abuja, the capital of Nigeria, on the question of Palestine and Palestinian representation. This conference called for immediate and unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all the occupied Palestinian Arab territories and expressed support for the blessed intifadah and for the question of honorable Jerusalem, the capital of the independent Palestinian state, where religions and civilization descended, from which the prophet Muhammad flew and which was the cradle of Jesus.
c. The Revolutionary Council expresses its appreciation for the European countries' stance and stresses the importance of Europe's assumption of an active role in the Mideast peace efforts. The council has marked the positive developments in the European stance recently and noted with appreciation the increase in European support for the occupied territories and also the contribution of Japan to that support and its supportive stance toward our legitimate national rights.
d. The Revolutionary Council appreciates the stances of the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, and the nonaligned countries—whose foreign ministers are due to hold a conference in a few days in Accra—and the friendly African and Latin American countries. It calls for further coordination and interaction with them.
e. The Revolutionary Council has followed with great interest the recent events in the Soviet Union. While regarding these events as an internal matter, it wishes the Soviet Union and its friendly people stability and progress under its constitutional legitimacy and unity. The council wishes to see the Soviet Union exercise its international role in the service of issues of peace and justice in the world and in the region in accordance with international legitimacy. It hopes that the Soviet Union will help give the Mideast peace process and will facilitate the convening of the peace conference.
f. The Revolutionary Council expresses its appreciation of the stances of Vatican City and his holiness the pope, and also of Islamic and other Christian bodies and leaderships in support of our people and their inalienable national rights, particularly their stances on the issue of holy Jerusalem and its religious and historical position.
g. The Revolutionary Council expresses its solidarity with the issues of peoples and freedom in the world and, in particular, stresses its support and solidarity with the people of South Africa in their just struggle against apartheid and for the attainment of their rights and independence.
h. The Revolutionary Council salutes the masses of our Arab and Islamic nation and its national and friendly forces in the world which stand by the struggle of our people and their blessed intifadah, and provide moral and material support for the Palestinian people in their confrontation of the oppressive measures, annihilation, and economic blockade to which they are subjected.
i. The Revolutionary Council expresses its special appreciation to the sisterly Tunisian state and people and their struggler President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali for the firm support Tunisia provides the PLO and our people's just cause.

Glory and immortality for our honourable martyrs, and greetings of esteem, pride, and appreciation to our steadfast people inside the occupied land, and to our prisoners, detainees, and wounded. The banner of struggle will remain hoisted with determination until freedom is attained and occupation is removed from our chaste land, led by the city of cities, our holy Jerusalem. Revolution until victory!

'Arafat To Attend Arab League Meeting in Cairo

NC2408131691 Paris AFP in English 1248 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Excerpt] Manama, Aug 24 (AFP) - PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat will lead a Palestinian delegation to an Arab League ministerial meeting in Cairo next month to discuss Palestinian representation at a Middle East peace conference, the Arabic-language daily AL-HAYAT reported Saturday.

The Palestine Liberation Organization leader wants to review with Arab foreign ministers "the shape of Palestinian participation at a peace conference" set for October, the London-based daily said, citing Palestinian sources in Cairo.

'Arafat has been at odds with Egyptian leaders since he supported Iraq during the Gulf crisis, while the Cairo government backed a U.S.-led alliance that ousted Iraq from Kuwait in February.

In Sanaa, the PLO representative said officials from his organization and the National Palestinian Salvation

Front—grouping factions opposed to 'Arafat—would also meet in September in the Yemeni capital to discuss the peace conference.

Yahya Rabah told AFP the meeting was being held at the request of Arafat and aimed at securing participation of Palestinian factions to the next session of the Palestine National Council (PNC), or parliament in exile, which will shape the PLO's final position on the peace forum.

The PNC is expected to meet in Algeria September 10-15 to decide on the type of Palestinian participation at a peace conference co-sponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union. [passage omitted]

'Arafat Sends Congratulations to Gorbachev

NC2308135191 Paris AFP in English 1337 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] Tunis, Aug 23 (AFP)—PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat congratulated Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev on his return to power and expressed the hope Moscow would continue its Middle East peace efforts, reports here said Friday.

'Arafat expressed "in his name and the name of the Palestinian people, his warm congratulations to Mr. Gorbachev and the Soviet peoples," according to a message carried by the official Palestinian news agency, WAFA.

"Perestroyka will continue in the Soviet Union and the (Soviet) people will adhere more to this policy and support work of the leadership in implementing democratic reform," the Palestine Liberation Organization leader said.

'Arafat said in the message he was convinced Moscow "will pursue its leadership role in the service of peace based on international law and justice in the Middle East and in the world."

"We are confident that your efforts for a Middle East peace conference and the establishment of a just and durable peace in the region will not stop," 'Arafat said in the message.

'Arafat said he believed in "continued support from the Soviet Union for the rights of the Palestinian people and self-determination."

The PLO said in an official statement Wednesday that events in the Soviet Union were an internal affair, but Palestinian and Israeli sources said a PLO-signed leaflet welcoming the coup was distributed Monday in the occupied territories.

PLO Sends Message to President Yeltsin

NC2508154391 Paris AFP in English 1506 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] Tunis, Aug 25 (AFP) - The Palestine Liberation Organization has sent a message to Russian President Boris Yeltsin hailing last week's "victory for democracy" in the Soviet Union, Palestinian sources reported here Sunday.

The message was delivered by Nabil 'Amr, the senior Palestinian representative in Moscow, and was released here by the PLO.

"Our people, who are proud of their ties to Russia, congratulate you on the victory for democracy," the message said.

"Our people, our leadership and our president, Yasir 'Arafat, followed with great interest your spectacular position in the defense of democracy...

"From the start of the failed coup in the Soviet Union the Palestinian leadership declared itself to be in favor of the stability of the federation and for respect for democratic and constitutional institutions."

The PLO in its official reaction to last Monday's coup by hardliners against President Mikhail Gorbachev described the takeover as an internal Soviet matter and said it hoped the Soviet Union would continue to play a role in Middle East affairs.

But Palestinians living under Israeli occupation welcomed Gorbachev's ouster as signalling a return to a more militant, pro-Arab Soviet foreign policy.

PLO Official, Soviet Envoy Review Developments

JN2308165591 Sanaa Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1600 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] Brother Abu-Ja'far ['Abd-al-Latif Abu-Hijlah], director general of the PLO Political Department, received the Soviet ambassador to Tunisia in Tunis yesterday. They reviewed the current developments in the Soviet Union and the Soviet ambassador briefed brother Abu-Ja'far on these developments. Abu-Ja'far then expressed the best wishes of the PLO and the Palestinian people for stability and progress in the Soviet Union.

PLO Wants USSR To Regain 'Superpower' Status

LD2608045291 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] Brothers, the writers of the Israeli media are revising their old books. Here they are, as usual, trying to distort the Palestinian position. This time they are focusing on the events that have hit the Soviet Union in an effort to turn international public opinion against the Palestinian people, to effect a change in the Soviet leadership's position on the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, and to facilitate the immigration of Soviet Jews to Israel. These media are doing so in exactly the same way as they had previously distorted the clear and sincere Palestinian stance on the Gulf crisis, when, together with their American and Western media-backers, they succeeded in turning the feeble-minded in the Gulf against the Palestinian people and their wise leadership.

Although we do not, and should not, want to enter into trivial arguments with Israeli media about the Palestinian position on the events taking place in the friendly Soviet Union, we should pause when the Israeli media pumps out analyses consisting of claims and lies which basically aim at achieving the Israeli objective of turning international, and especially Soviet, public opinion against the Palestinian leadership. That leadership removed all opportunites for those harboring ill will when it announced on the first day of the crisis that what has happened is an internal Soviet affair, which we are following with an interest imposed upon us by our close relations with that country. If our people in the occupied territories had expressed satisfaction with the changes that took place in the Soviet Union, then by adopting such a stance, every one of our people was thus expressing his sincere and loyal desire to see that country recover its strength, overcome its predicament, and rectify its positions. Such positions killed us when we saw that country standing with disinterest in the shadow of the harsh American policies toward Iraq, which was subjected to an aggression by 30 states under the leadership of the United States, an aggression which would not have occurred had the Soviet friends been in a different situation. This stance of the Palestinian on the street also stems from a hope we had long wished to be achieved and expressed frankly to the Soviet friends; that is, to see the Soviet Union recover its position as a superpower and restore the lost international balance, after Washington had removed this role in order to design and implement whatever policies it wants under the banner of what it calls the new world order.

There is no doubt that the PLO, which since the first day of the crisis had stated its clear and sincere stance toward those events—given that it was an internal Soviet affair—had done so out of its conviction of the need to respect the choices of the Soviet people, and thereby cut off the guilty utterances which tried to attribute to the organization things it had not said and policies it had not adopted.

While we greatly appreciate the choices of the friendly Soviet people in determining their destiny and choosing their leader in a manner which achieves security, development, and progress, we also hope that the Soviet leadership would be able to solve its own problems without dictation from anyone and restore to this world—which is stricken with American unipolarity—the necessary balance in order to achieve peace and security for all the peoples of the world.

Commentary Examines Stance of Post-Coup USSR

LD2408200391 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] O brothers, now that the fog has cleared from the sky of the Soviet Union and the situation has calmed down and Mikhail Gorbachev has returned to the seat of power, attention is once again being focused on the Middle East region, specifically toward the peace conference invitations that U.S. President George Bush and his Soviet counterpart intend to extend to the parties of the conflict next October.

President Gorbachev has come out stronger from the crisis he faced during the past days. He affirmed that the United States and a majority of the Western countries have played an essential role in his return to power. Therefore, the agreements between Moscow and Washington in the various fields, including the agreement on holding a peace conference on the Middle East, have been reinforced.

The Soviet attitude toward attempts to release the peace process in the region conform almost totally with the American attitude. Regarding the peace conference, there is a common Soviet-American stand to bring the parties to the conflict to the negotiating table and to postpone discussion of specific points of the talks' content until after the peace march has begun.

With regard to Palestinian participation in the proposed conference, the Soviet Union's official stand is for the legitimate and sole representative of the Palestinian people and that it is necessity for it to participate in all stages of the peace process. In practice, however, it seems the stand conforms with the U.S. position. During the previous period, we did not hear any Soviet official statements that oppose or even criticize the directions of U.S. policy in this respect. At any rate, and regardless of how big the gap was between the official and the actual stands of states regarding peace in the Middle East, the Palestinian stand is based strongly on the pillars of international legitimacy. The PLO has declared more than once that it requires written, clear, and well defined replies from the U.S. Administration as to how UN Security Council Resolution 242, which calls for Israeli withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied since 1967, will be implemented. In addition, acknowledgment of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, their right to chose representatives without outside interference, and non-acceptance of the exclusion of Arab Jerusalem subjects and representation, at any stage of the peace process, and the halt of (Jewish) settlement. [sentence as heard]

Until now the U.S. Administration has not sent any reply. All parties working toward the realization of the peace process in the region must be fully aware that a departure from international legitimacy means a departure from peace. Consequently, the reinforcement and embodiment of the principles of international legitimacy will strengthen the prospects of starting the peace march.

Paper Links Soviet Events to Peace Conference

TA2308144691 Jerusalem AL-FAJR in Arabic 22 Aug 91 p 1

[Editorial: "The Soviet People Can Overcome the Crisis"]

[Text] At a time when developments in the Soviet arena are accelerating and in light of the reports from Moscow that speak of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's return to power, what we would like to stress at this stage is that, as Palestinians, we are first and foremost interested in the internal stability of the Soviet Union and in its emergence from the current crisis as a more powerful and vigorous nation. This is because stability in this country is in the interest of all the peoples of the world, including the Palestinian people, given the historic friendship that binds our people and all subjugated peoples with this friendly country.

U.S. and European news media tried to distort our Palestinian stance regarding these developments, just as happened last year, for example, at the beginning of the Gulf crisis. This attempt, however, was nipped in the bud when Palestinian sources announced that the events in the Soviet Union are a purely internal affair and that the foremost concern of the PLO and all our people is the Palestinian cause and whatever affects the political changes and circumstances around it, while we harbor the sincere wish that the Soviet peoples and their leadership will be able to overcome the explosive crisis and provide the means for the strength, power, unity, and stability of this superpower whose relations affect the other countries of the world because of its well-known balanced role in the past, the present, and necessarily in the future.

As a result, Palestinian diplomacy is now moving toward paying more and deeper attention to the importance of supporting the justifications and reasons for convening the proposed peace conference at its determined date in October. Despite the fact that all eyes are now focused on the Soviet Union, the East European countries, and the conflicting possibilities in the near future of entangled and escalating events in those regions, which are standing at historic and decisive turning points, the entire Middle East region is also tied to that conference, which by itself constitutes an opening for a historic and decisive turning point.

Paper Rejects U.S. Hegemony in New World Order

TA2308160091 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 22 Aug 91 p 7

[Editorial: "Gorbachev's Return—Lessons and Conclusions"]

[Text] Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev is likely to have returned to Moscow by now to resume his task of leading the Soviet Union after the failed attempt to overthrow him. Thus ended a movement which, had it succeeded, might have changed the course of history.

Although what happened in the Soviet Union was an internal Soviet affair, this raised many questions and the answer to each question directly affects the nature of the course of international relations. Has the cold war really ended? Should one regard problems inside the Soviet Union as internal issues, or does their solution represent an international responsibility? What about the fate of Central and East European countries? What will be the repercussions on Third World countries and all nations, particularly the Middle East?

These questions were asked vigorously during the hours in which President Gorbachev was absent from the seat of power. Although the situation has now changed, this does not mean that the questions do not need answers, because it has been proved that international relations are to a large extent linked to the nature, form, and structure of the relationship between Moscow and Washington.

Though the emergency committee set up after Gorbachev's ouster has been dissolved, the Soviet Union's problems have not been solved. On this basis, we cannot imagine a new world order while merely believing that the Soviet Union's domestic problems have reduced the Soviet role in the international arena.

The United States is now required to reassess its policies. The era of international detente, the new order, or any other name that may be used does not signify U.S. hegemony under any circumstances, nor does it mean that Washington can act on the basis of its own interests alone. The new world must be based on the principles and foundations of international legitimacy.

In the hours following the announcement of President Gorbachev's ouster, the world held its breath. Events could have led countries and nations to new political arenas based on polarization, the arms race, alliances, and wars by proxy, that is, tools of the cold war taken up once again with a new approach.

The lessons and conclusions are many and varied. As long as life goes on, changes will occur that will have an impact on the making of history. Consequently, relying on the pillars of international legitimacy in international relations is the guarantee for progress toward peace, security, stability, mutual cooperation, and respect.

We believe that the Middle East region, which is still suffering from a total lack of application of international legitimacy, can become the launching pad for a new world order. It is essential to stress here that peace in the region must be based on international legitimacy, not on the wishes and interests of this or that party, for international legitimacy is indivisible.

'Arafat Condemns U.S. 'Double Standard'

NC2408101691 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0908 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Khartoum, 24 Aug (MENA)—PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat has affirmed his rejection of the American and Israeli conditions which say no to an independent Palestinian state and no to the halting of settlement building.

In an interview with Sudanese television last night, 'Arafat said that the Palestinian revolution will continue and so will the intifadah in the occupied Arab territories until the Palestine flag is raised over the walls of Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Palestine.

Asked whether he thinks that the peace conference will lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state, 'Arafat said how could a Palestinian state be established when there is an autonomous rule or self-administration that has the power only to run municipal affairs and collect the trash and when security, foreign affairs, and natural resources are managed by Israel?

'Arafat noted that the U.S. Administration follows a double-standard policy in its dealings with international legitimacy, describing the new world order as a slavery system.

The PLO chairman held talks in Khartoum with Lieutenant General 'Umar al-Bashir, chairman of the Command Council of the Sudanese salvation revolution on the latest developments in the Palestinian issue.

Al-Sa'ih on PNC Session, Dialogue With Hamas

JN2508093491 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 25 Aug pp 1, 14

[By Sa'd al-Silawi]

[Text] The formation of the Palestine National Council [PNC] and the participation of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, and the Syria-based Palestinian factions in it are still under discussion. A committee from the Palestinian leadership has been formed to conduct dialogue with Hamas. It comprises Abu-'Ali Mustafa [Mustafa al-Zibri], member of the PLO Executive Committee; Hani al-Hasan, member of the Fatah Central Committee; and Salih Ra'fat, member of the political bureau of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The dialogue is expected to start in Amman soon with Hamas' representative in Jordan Ibrahim Ghawshah. In addition, and as PNC Speaker Shaykh 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Sa'ih said, lists of the new PNC members have been issued pending Hamas' stance toward participation. He stressed that the Palestinian leadership has formed a committee for dialogue with Hamas. Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine, will also meet with the Palestinian factions in Damascus early next month for talks on the Syria-based Palestinian factions' participation in the PNC.

In a statement to SAWT AL-SHA'B, Shaykh 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Sa'ih stressed the critical stage through which the Palestine question is passing. He said this stage requires all Palestinian factions and the brothers in Hamas to unify their position and participate in the forthcoming PNC session.

Hamas, which has abandoned its old demand for 40 percent of the PNC seats, has, in return, asked for holding elections in the occupied territories. Shaykh al-Sa'ih, who stressed that he is not against the idea of elections, asked how elections can be held for the Palestinians under the Israeli occupation and how elections can be held outside. The PNC speaker reaffirmed the need to include in the PNC all Palestinian factions because unity under these critical circumstances should be the main objective of all and the onslaught to which the Palestinian people's cause is being exposed is fiercer and more dangerous than ever before.

Shaykh al-Sa'ih denied reports that the PNC will not convene in Algiers due to disagreement over the location. He said it was agreed with the Algerian Government to convene the PNC next month and intensive contacts are under way at present to define the date of the session and then invitations will be extended to the members.

Shaykh 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Sa'ih believes that, in light of the current circumstances, it is important to hold the PNC session at which all that is being said about solution plans will be presented so that the Palestinian people's representatives would give their opinion about all proposed solutions to the Palestine question.

In a previous interview with SAWT AL-SHA'B, President 'Arafat asserted that the Palestinians have two basic points guiding their work: Jerusalem and democracy. He said: Jihad for these two issues is continuing and we will not cede Jerusalem or democracy.

But will the the PLO cancel its political program as drawn up by the PNC in Algiers in 1988? An informed Palestinian source said the Palestinian peace offensive, which began in 1988 after the PNC session and after President Yasir 'Arafat had launched the Palestinian initiative, will continue and that the PLO's political program will not be retracted. The source stressed that peace is Israel's main enemy.

Qaddumi Reviews Recent Events With PRC Envoy

LD2208094391 Algiers Voice of Palestine 1700 GMT 19 Aug 91

[Text] Brother Abu al-Lutf [Faruq al-Qaddumi], the head of the PLO's Political Department, received this morning in Tunis Comrade Zhu Yinglu, ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Tunisia. The officials exchanged views on the latest developments and events concerning the Middle East. The Chinese ambassador renewed his country's firm stance, particularly regarding the rights of the Palestinian people, especially its right to self-determination and the consideration of the PLO as the sole and legitimate representative of the Palestinian people in all international forums and those concerning the Palestinian issue.

Commentary Praises PRC Stance on Peace Process

LD2608040491 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Unattributed commentary]

[Text] The talks being held between the head of the PLO's Political Department, brother Faruq Qaddumi, and Chinese officials are extraordinary and especially important. This importance stems from the weight of China's influence in the international arenas, given that it is one of the five permanent members of the Security Council and that the Chinese position has been cultivated by the Palestinian and Arab positions, which are based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and call for the comprehensive implementation of those resolutions in all hotbeds of tension in the world—especially the Palestinian cause, which is one of the most just and important causes. This calls for speedy international action to place this cause on the threshold of a comprehensive and permanent solution, to the benefit of world peace, about which the United States is singing under the shadow of what it calls the new world order.

It is satisfying that China is joining the Arab states, the European community, and other regional groups in thinking that the current circumstances should be exploited to achieve a comprehensive and permament settlement in a way that brings about security and peace for all the peoples of the world and restores rights to their legitimate owners.

If the great powers decide to respond to the Chinese perception of a solution, then it would be possible for the next few weeks to witness developments of utmost importance regarding finding a comprehensive solution and establishing peace in the Middle East. This, in turn, would constitute evidence in confirmation of the international inclination to end the the long-standing conflict which has multiplied the suffering of the region's people.

We calculate that the required impetus for the peace process calls for the intensification of all efforts of the permanent Security Council member states, one of whose important pillars is China, together with the friendly Soviet Union. This also requires a focus on the holding of an international peace conference, with full powers, in accordance with the international models; given that this conference is the mechanism representing international will and expressing countries' responsibility toward building the pillars of a comprehensive and permanent peace in the region and the world.

Algeria

Government, Parties Issue 'Final Communique'

LD2408133191 Algiers APS in English 1017 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Algiers, 24/08/91 (APS)—The second meeting between the government and political parties ended its works Saturday morning by the adoption of a final communique which underlined that the meeting held in conformity with the final communique of the first meeting held from July 30 to August 2, debated questions related to the legislative elections. The works of the second meeting between the government and the political parties opened by the discussion of the agenda which included two essential points:

1—The electoral projects
2—The political questions related to the electoral process.

The government presented, as agreed on, an expose including a synthesis of proposals of parties submitted to the government. The representatives of parties formulated their suggestions and opinions on the reclassification and the enrichment of these proposals. The participants examined the electoral project which constitutes one of the main concerns in the present phase. The political parties had contacts and held meetings among themselves before and after the meeting with the government so as to examine this question and make collectively or individually proposals to the government. The proposals mainly centered on the amendments and enrichments of the electoral law, the law on the electoral constituencies and the meeting of objective conditions and the setting up of an adequate political atmosphere for the success of these elections.

In this context, after examining and debating all the aspects of the question, the government committed itself to examine under its own responsibility, all the proposals which have been submitted to it individually or collectively and work for the formulation of the electoral law and the law on constituencies so as to submit them to the People's National Assembly.

The government remains ready to receive other proposals (?from the) parties and continue multiform consultation with them. The participants granted a particular attention to the political questions, mainly the consequences of the events that took place in June 1991, the concerns related to the state of siege as well as conditions to provide an adequate political atmosphere, the meeting of equitable conditions of financing and access to media for the success of the forthcoming elections whose date will be fixed later in conformity with the commitments of the government and the final communique of the first meeting which fixes the date of the legislative elections before the end of this year. However, the National Liberation Front (FLN), pointed out that it has not asked for the revision of the electoral laws.

Elections To 'Actually Take Place' by Dec

LD2408135591 Algiers APS in English 1028 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Algiers, 24/08/91 (APS)—Head of government Sid Ahmed Ghozali reassured on Friday political parties that anticipated legislative elections will "actually take place before the end of the year". As for the claim of raising the state of siege, the head of government did not think that it could thwart the ongoing of electoral process.

Furthermore, when several parties asked for the release of people detained in the last events, the prime minister reiterated public authorities' position "it is a matter of justice and can not be politically tackled" stated Ghozali.

While dealing with the reinstatement of dismissed workers following the strike of the Islamic Salvation Front, Sid Ahmed Ghozali reasserted his government's will to find a final solution to this problem.

Independent candidates' concern found a favourable echo within the government that envisages to review conditions posed to this category some of which are regarded as severe.

Eventually, the access of political parties to media was invoked by Ghozali who stated he is able to take such a matter in charge for the three public service media, the Algerian Press Agency, television and radio. However, he asserted that it (?does not) fall within his prerogatives to intervene within other media.

Founder Bechin Fekih Assumes FIS Leadership

LD2408161891 Algiers APS in Arabic 1455 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Excerpt] Cheikh Bechir Fekih, a founding member of the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] who has been attending the second meeting between the government and the parties as an observer since Thursday evening, said that as long as FIS officials abandoned it on the pretext of avoiding sedition, until Cheikh Abbasi and Ben Hadj are released and out of fear of pressure from the base, he will assume the leadership of FIS and manage its affairs. [passage omitted]

Egypt

AL-MUSAWWAR Interviews President Mubarak

NC2108193591 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1728 GMT 21 Aug 91

[Text] Cairo, 21 Aug (MENA)—President Muhammad Husni Mubarak expressed the hope that the peace conference will be held so that a genuine, comprehensive, and just peace can be achieved.

In an interview with the Egyptian magazine AL-MUSAWWAR, to be published on 23 August, Mubarak said that the two key issues of Jerusalem and the Palestinian representation remain unresolved, adding that the conference will not be held on the scheduled date if no agreement on these two matters has been reached.

On the question of Jerusalem, President Mubarak said that no one in the Arab or Islamic worlds can accept Israel's demand that Jerusalem be dropped from the agenda "because Jerusalem is part of the occupied land and Israel does not have the right to decide its future unilaterally and in a way that ignores the Palestinians' rights over the holy city."

Concerning the Palestinian representation, President Mubarak said that he told Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi when he visited Cairo recently that no Palestinian inside or outside the homeland would participate in peace talks without clear and unambiguous authorization from the PLO. Mubarak added that the whole world knows this, and Israel cannot ignore it.

President Mubarak expressed the hope that the consultations between the U.S. secretary of state and the parties concerned, particularly the Israelis, will lead to a solution of the Jerusalem and Palestinian representation issues, because this would facilitate the holding of the peace conference at the expected date. Mubarak said that the United States still considers Jerusalem occupied Arab territory where Israel has no right to decide its future unilaterally. He added: "Meanwhile, I hope that what Israel is announcing now about Jerusalem and the Golan is a negotiatiable stand, not a final one."

President Mubarak told AL-MUSAWWAR that no one can ask the Palestinians to make more concessions on such crucial issues as Jerusalem. He added: "I would advise the Palestinians, however, to assert their continued willingness to sit down and negotiate and to leave the rejection to Shamir."

President Mubarak deplored a statement attributed to Yasir 'Arafat in a French newspaper in which he was cited as saying that the coming peace conference will be nothing but a new Camp David. The president said that he found the statement puzzling because 'Arafat had frequently told him of his regret that "he could not now get half of what was offered in the Camp David accords." Mubarak wondered why 'Arafat's public statements differed from what he saod behind closed doors.

President Mubarak reiterated his advice that the Palestinians declare their continued readiness to negotiate, adding that no one can impose anything unacceptable on the Palestinians.

President Mubarak said that Egypt does not interfere in the PLO's affairs or in the issue of its leadership because such matters are the concern of the Palestinian people.

President Mubarak also commented on relations between Egypt and Libya, noting that the decision to remove the border and customs posts with Libya was reached to facilitate the movement of people and goods between the two countries in implementation of the cooperation agreements ratified by the Egyptian People's Assembly.

President Mubarak said that Egypt had not made this decision arbitrarily, noting that the question had long been studied from the point of view of security, smuggling, quarantine, etc.

President Mubarak expressed his belief that Egyptian and Libyan views are not considerably at variance with regard to unity. Colonel al-Qadhdhafi, he said, sees unity as a radical solution to all the Arab world's problems. We, Mubarak added, may agree with him on that, because we live at a time of large blocs and great economic groupings. Our past experience, however, has taught us that true unity can only emerge from the convergence of interests among nations. Unity based on the convergence of interests among nations will be stronger than one imposed by the will of leaders, Mubarak said.

President Mubarak explained that the measures which have been taken are designed to link the interests of the Egyptian and Libyan peoples through trade and employment. "At the same time, we are working to build a joint infrastructure to enhance these interests," he added.

Asked about the colonel's insistence on tripartite unity with Sudan, President Mubarak said: The colonel may hope for tripartite unity among Egypt, Libya, and Sudan, but I do not believe in the soundness of unity based on a political decision from above. Furthermore, the situation of the present regime in Sudan is cause for concern and does not encourage any steps in this direction. Nevertheless, I hope that the state of the regime in Sudan will improve, because the relations between the Egyptian and Sudanese peoples are eternal. He added that al-Turabi's control of this regime makes us cautious in our relations with the Khartoum government out of our desire to maintain the eternal relations between the two peoples and to avoid any complete estrangement that would undermine them.

He added that the issue is not al-Bashir himself, because I have no objection to him as a person, but the people behind him. President Mubarak said that what is particularly unfortunate is that the regime in Khartoum imagines that we want a new government there and are preparing for a coup, when we most emphatically reject any interference in the internal affairs of any country.

President Mubarak said that he and Col. al-Qadhdhafi currently have achieved near total understanding based on frankness and clarity. This is the best feature of my relations with the colonel. He added: The truth is that the colonel has kept his word and fulfilled his promises. Everyone should know this.

Asked about the white paper issued by King Husayn about Jordan's position on the Gulf crisis, the president said that the king has tried to justify his position at the expense of Egypt and the truth. He spoke about a

Jordanian initiative which never existed. President Mubarak said that he does not wish to comment on the contents of the king's paper, but he asked: If the king wants to justify his position, why did he use Egypt as a pretext and distort the facts?

President Mubarak affirmed that understanding always exists between him and Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad. There is agreement on the basic guidelines and many details for the form and framework of future action.

Asked whether Egypt still refuses to deal with the Iraqi president, President Mubarak asked: How can I deal with him when he stabbed me in the back? He promised me he would not attack Kuwait, and then he did. He invented a false story about our meeting in Baghdad when I went to see him in a last attempt to save the situation.

'Arafat Adviser Arrives for Consultations

NC2308205591 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2045 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] Cairo, 23 Aug (MENA)—Hani al-Hasan, political adviser to Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, arrived in Cairo this evening from Tunis. During his visit, which will last a few days, the Palestinian official will hold talks with Egyptian officials on the peace conference, including the issue of Palestinian participation.

Foreign Minister Turns Down Levi's Invitation

JN2208064091 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 22 Aug 91 p 28

[Text] Cairo, AL-RA'Y—AL-RA'Y has learned that Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa has turned down an invitation by Israeli Foreign Minister David Levi to visit the Zionist entity. The Egyptian foreign minister asserted that he will not pay any visit to Israel unless Israel offers concrete proposals to eliminate the its obstacles to the peace process.

Musa also asserted to the Israeli side that he will not visit Jerusalem. In the instance he visits Israel, he added, all his talks with the Israelis will take place in Tel Aviv. It is worth mentioning that the Egyptian foreign minister has thus far refused to visit Israel since the endorsement of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty.

Daily: U.S. Encourages Israel To Resist Peace

NC2608054991 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2050 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] Cairo, 25 Aug (MENA)—AL-AKHBAR emphasizes that Israel's insistence on obstructing an agreement for the release of the hostages held in Lebanon is part of a comprehensive strategy designed to maintain the dispute between the Western states—whose nationals are held hostage by Lebanese groups—and the Arabs in general.

In Monday's editorial, AL-AKHBAR says the continued U.S. stand of disregarding Israel's violation of all international laws and norms is what encourages the Tel Aviv leaders to defy the entire international community and to resist all efforts to end the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The paper calls on U.S. President George Bush, "if he is really serious in his promises and pledges to find a genuine and lasting peace in the Middle East" to help remove the mines Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir and his advisers craftily plant on the path to peace from time to time.

Libya

Visiting Iranian Minister Meets al-Qadhdhafi

LD2308172691 Tripoli Great Jamahiriyah Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] The brother leader of the revolution received brother Hoseyn Sheykholeslam, Iranian deputy foreign minister and envoy of President 'Ali Hashemi-Rafsanjani. The Iranian envoy delivered a letter from the Iranian president to the brother leader.

Help To Foil U.S. 'Plots' Pledged

LD2508004291 Tehran IRNA in English 0618 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Algiers Aug. 24, IRNA—Iran's visiting Deputy Foreign Minister for Afro-Arab Affairs Hoseyn Sheykholeslam submitted a message of Iran's President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani to Libyan leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi in Banghazi, northeastern Libya, on Friday. In the meeting, also attended by Iran's ambassador to Tripoli Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad Reza Nuri Shahrudi, the situation of Middle East and the Palestine issue were discussed. Briefing the Libyan leader on Iran's stands toward Palestine, Sheykholeslam pointed to American plots against the Muslims and the Palestinians in particular. He said the American peace initiative endangers future of the Palestinian aspirations and the Islamic holy places, the holy Qods especially. Sheykholeslam also called for an all-out effort to encounter the present dangerous situation and employment of all resources of Muslims to this end. Welcoming Rafsanjani's message, Al-Qadhdhafi pledged support for Iran's stands on the issue of Palestine and said the holy Qods belongs to the Islamic community. He also announced Libya's readiness to cooperate to foil the ominous plot. Sheykholeslam visited Algiers and Tunis before arriving in Tripoli and submitted President Rafsanjani's messages to the leaders of Algeria and Tunisia.

'Arafat Arrives in Tripoli 24 Aug

LD2408152791 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 1415 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Tripoli, 24 August—Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat arrived in Tripoli at the head of a delegation this afternoon on a visit to the Great Jamahiriyah.

He was welcomed at Tripoli International Airport by the brother the secretary for trade union affairs and vocational leagues at the General People's Congress, as well as by the ambassador of Palestine in the Great Jamahiriyah and members of his embassy.

Egyptian Oil Cooperation Protocol Signed

LD2208234991 Tripoli JANA in English 1637 GMT 22 Aug 91

[Text] Banghazi, 22nd Hannibal [August] 91, JANA, Arab Maghreb Union Pool—This morning in the city of Banghazi, a protocol was concluded in the oil sector between Great Al-Jamahiriyah and Egypt. It was signed by the secretary of the People's Committee for Oil and Mr. Hamdi Banbi, his Egyptian counterpart.

The protocol includes the promotion of integration in all oil projects and the establishment of a joint company to study the engineering and designing work apart from exchanging know-how and the expansion of the training spheres in this sector.

Sudan

Paper Names Arrested Conspirators in Foiled Coup

PM2308112091 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 22 Aug 91 pp 1, 4

['Umar Muhammad Hasan report: "Coup Attempt Foiled in Sudan"]

[Excerpt] Khartoum—The evening before last Sudanese authorities managed to foil a scheme to topple the regime before its leaders started to implement it. Informed Sudanese sources told AL-HAYAH that the authorities watched the conspirators' movements for some time until they were able to obtain information about those involved, who included retired and active members of the military as well as politicians, and then arrested a number of them.

AL-HAYAH learned that the evening before last the authorities arrested a number of both retired and serving officers. The arrestees did not include any retired or active soldiers—which indicates that the scheme was confined to the officers who have been identified. The most notable of the detainees are: Retired Major General Muhammad 'Abdallah Khalifah, who seems to be the leader of the attempt; retired Brigadier Muhammad Ahmad al-Rih al-Fakki, a former officer in the Artillery and Paratroops Corps; Colonel Yahya Jammal, of the Tank Corps; Colonel Ahmad Khalid Fadlallah, of the Tank Corps, who has just completed his service in the United Arab Emirates; Colonel al-Fadil Salih, of the Tank Corps, who was recently transferred to the Army General Command's war operations department; Colonel Sha'-al-Din Muhammad, of the artillery; Lieutenant Colonel Kamal Ahmad, of the Paratroops Corps; and Lieutenant Colonel Pilot Muhammad Hamadtu, of the Air Force.

Uncorroborated reports from Khartoum say that a number of politicians have been arrested. The most prominent of them is Muhammad 'Abdallah 'Abd-al-Rahman Naqdallah, chairman of the supreme council for religious affairs in Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi's government, having the rank of minister of state.

Informed sources expressed their belief that the "coup attempt was being prepared in the interests of the dissolved Ummah Party led by Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi." But the sources did not cite his arrest or that or any of his aides.

Until yesterday evening no official statement had been issued by the Sudanese Government on the reports about the attempted coup. [passage omitted]

Spokesman on Foiled Coup

NC2308145991 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1425 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] Khartoum, 23 Aug (MENA)—It was announced in Khartoum this afternoon that a coup attempt involving serving and retired Army officers and a number of civilians had been foiled.

Staff Major General Muhammad Tulbah 'Uwaydah, official spokesman for the Sudanese Armed Forces, said that the coup attempt was foiled while in an early stage, adding that 10 serving and retired officers and a few civilians had been arrested.

The Sudanese spokesman stated that those detainees who acknowledged their guilt during preliminary investigations are now being interrogated.

He added that anyone found innocent will be released, while those who have confessed and anyone else found to have involved will be referred to trial as soon as investigations are completed.

The Sudanese military spokesman also said that the coup attempt was instigated and financed by certain foreign powers, but did not identify them.

The spokesman noted that the coup plotters had been under continuous surveillance since they began their activity and stressed that the security authorities had nipped the attempt in the bud.

MENA's correspondent in Khartoum has learned from a responsible security source that the officers participating in the coup attempt were arrested on the night of 20 August.

Among the arrested civilians were leaders of the Ummah Party and the Democratic Unionist Party.

MENA's correspondent notes that this is the second coup attempt since the national salvation revolution came to power on 30 June 1989. Twenty-eight officers were executed in the wake of the first coup attempt.

Tunisia

President Ben Ali, Gorbachev Exchange Messages

LD2208214791 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 22 Aug 91

[Text] President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali sent a message to Soviet President Gorbachev congratulating him on his return to the leadership of the Soviet Union and reinstatement of constitutional legitimacy to that friendly country. The president also expressed his best wishes to the friendly Soviet people for further progress and advancement in an atmosphere of stability and democracy.

President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali received a verbal message from President Mikhail Gorbachev. The message was conveyed this evening by the ambassador of the Soviet Union in Tunis to Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahia.

Ben Ali Meets Craxi, Comments on Soviet Events

LD2408223191 Tunis Tunisian Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Today, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali met with Bettino Craxi, the leader of the Italian Socialist Party, who voiced his satisfaction with the steady development of the relations of friendship between Tunisia and Italy. In this connection, he predicted the increasing arrival of Italian tourists in Tunisia. Bettino Craxi expressed the hope that Italian businessmen will increase their participation in economic activities which can contribute to modern development in Tunisia. He explained that he raised with the head of state recent events in the Soviet Union. He said it was fortunate that calm has returned. He also expressed hope that the peace process, dialogue and cooperation will continue in the world.

* Military Court To Try 'Attempted Coup' Accused

91P40416A London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 18 Aug 91 pp 1, 4

[Article by Muhammad 'Ali al-Qulaybi]

[Text] Tunis—AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT learned from informed sources that the military court in Tunis will begin deliberations on 31 August in a trial of the fundamentalist elements of the prohibited Ennahdha movement who were arrested on charges of participating in the attempt to overthrow the government.

It is said that Tunisian Foreign [as published] Minister Abdallah Kallel revealed in a press conference on 22 May the threads of this coup attempt, which the Tunisian security apparatus was able to thrwart in the planning stages.

According to these same sources, the number to be tried before the court is approximately 500, 80 of whom are military: officers, noncommissioned officers and soldiers.

These sources add that in view of the high number of accused, the trial will be held in groups, starting with the principal group comprising the senior ranking military officers, security officers, and the prominent leadership of Ennahdha, whose connection to the overthrow attempt has been established by investigations.

AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT has learned that Rached Ghannouchi, leader of Ennahdha, and a number of other movement officials living abroad such as Salah Karkar, Muhammad Shamam, and Lahbib Mokni will be tried in absentia.

It has also been learned that this month several of the courts in the country have begun further examination of the cases concerning affiliation with the Ennahdha movement, which is not officially recognized.

One of these courts sentenced Hussein el-Jendoubi, a member of the clandestine consultative council belonging to the movement, to five months in prison.

Information indicates that the Tunisian Government has distinguished between those accused in cases of violence, terrorism, and participation in the attempt to overthrow the regime, and those accused in political cases of membership in the prohibited movement. Pursuant to this, the prevailing view of these observers is that the judgments of the military tribunal in Tunis will include the death penalty, especially against the principal group.

Because the sentences handed down by the military tribunal are not subject to appeal, Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali alone will be able to issue a pardon or to comute the death penalty to life in prison.

Concurrently, the Tunisian populace was surprised by the decision to increase the price of some basic foodstuffs (bread and oil).

This increase ranges between seven and 10 percent and follows a recent increase for milk and sugar.

This increase calls to mind what was known as the "Bread Issue" of 1974 when a decision to raise the price of bread and grain derivatives was rescinded only 24 hours after the announcement. Tunisians went into the streets and Army intervention resulted in a number of casualties. It should be noted that the last increase in the price of bread was two years ago.

Observers see this decision as representing the implementation of the option toward which the government has been moving in recent years: using the public fund for subsidy to maintain prices of basic foodstuffs at an acceptable level, while preserving the fund as a means to intervene in social policy and support the interests of the poor. This explains the parallel measures taken by the country in the interest of the estimated 100,000 destitute families in an effort to lessen the repercussions of this increase.

The Tunisian populace will accept these measures with difficulty, especially because of the adverse effect on basic commodities, and also because of the drop in buying power caused by low salaries and price increases.

Western Sahara

Moroccan Forces Continue Bir Lahlou Operations

LD2308172791 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] We received a Sahrawi Information Ministry statement a short while ago saying that Moroccan forces continue their military operations against Bir Lahlou. The statement recalls that a similar operation continues at Mijic and adjoining areas. The Sahrawi statement points out that Morocco's resort to the logic of war reflects a policy of escape forward [hurub ila al-amam] aimed at imposing conditions for organizing a plebscite on the eve of the 6 September cease-fire.

Polisario Official Opposes Referendum Maneuvers

LD2308231291 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] In Paris, the Polisario Front accuses Morocco of using (?procrastination) maneuvers in order to impede the organization of a referendum on self-determination in the Western Sahara, which the United Nations called for within the framework of its peace plan.

Polisario Front representative in France, Baba Sayed, described as falsified truth the statement by King Hassan II, when he held the United Nations responsible for any delay in carrying out the referendum. This must be preceded by the proclamation of a ceasefire on 6 September, between the Moroccan and Polisario forces.

Baba Sayed said that Morocco does not want a referendum which is just and has integrity, but wants something which will enable it to illegally annex the Saharan territory. The Polisario representative addressed an urgent appeal to the UN Security Council that the latter reject Morocco's request to postpone the scheduled referendum, in accordance with resolution 690, to the end of January next year.

In this respect, Polisario officials will meet in Geneva next Monday with UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar, to clarify this issue.

It is known that talks were held on 13 August, between Perez de Cuellar and Moroccan Foreign Minister Abdellatif Filali.

Polisario Concerned Over Moroccan 'Incursions'

LD2408102991 Madrid RNE-1 Radio Network in Spanish 1000 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Sources close to the Polisario Front in Madrid said that the latest incursions by the Moroccan Army into Saharan territory could lead to a large-scale flareup in the region. The Polisario Front is in permanent contact with the Spanish Government and keeping it informed of developments. The front urged the Spanish Government to act in support of the peace process in the Western Sahara outlined by the United Nations, which includes a cease-fire on 6 September, the deployment of peacekeeping forces, and the holding of a referendum on self-determination in January.

Government Denies Story on Moroccan Victory

LD2608030791 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] The Sahrawi Government today denied a story carried by a Western news agency that Moroccan forces had taken over the headquarters of the general command of the Polisario Front in Bir Lahlou. A statement by the Sahrawi Information Ministry said that the Moroccan forces have been moving toward the water wells, where the civilian inhabitants are centered, for three days. A previous Sahrawi statement had said that Moroccan forces were pursuing the inhabitants in order to force them to move onto arid areas.

Bahrain

Dailies Comment on Dispute With Qatar

JN2408101291 Manama WAKH in Arabic 0530 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Excerpts] Manama, 24 Aug (WAKH)—Today's papers in the Arabian Gulf states highlight news, events, and topics with international implications, especially the consequences of last week's coup attempt in Moscow. [passage omitted]

Two Bahraini dailies commented on the Bahraini Foreign Ministry's call last week for a meeting of the tripartite committee on a dispute between Qatar and Bahrain.

AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ says the call represents a sincere brotherly initiative and reflects genuine desire for a cordial solution to disputed issues between Qatar nd Bahrain within the spirit of brotherhood and cooperation. [passage omitted]

For its part, AL-AYYAM hopes for a just settlement of the border dispute so as to maintain the Gulf house's strength, continuity, and credibility.

The paper adds: We would have thought that what happened to Kuwait was a lesson for all of us. We never wished things to go as far as they did. We stood puzzled over the past days as we watched the escalation of events in our territorial waters. One lesson should have been more than enough.

The paper goes on to say: Our leadership always believed that the solution should be worked out in one family—a brotherly solution that stops escalation. We were, and still are pinning hopes on the noble initiative of the custodian of the two holy mosques so that the solution will come from within the house under whose roof we all live, the Gulf Cooperation Council. We were under the impression that the council's experience and its belief in the traditions established by its leaders will give true answers and enable the council to solve territorial disputes among its member states.

If such a solution cannot be worked out, says AL-AYYAM, there remains hope that the two fraternal states will jointly agree on international arbitration. [passage omitted]

Amir Receives Visiting Kuwaiti Minister

JN2608114591 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1101 GMT 26 Aug 91

[Text] Manama, 26 Aug (WAKH)—Bahraini Amir His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah received a written message from Kuwaiti Amir His Highness Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah.

The message was delivered by Shaykh Salim Sabah al-Salim al-Sabah, Kuwaiti deputy prime minister and foreign minister, when he was received by the amir of Bahrain here today. Prime Minister His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Salman Al Khalifah attended the meeting.

The message deals with bilateral relations and issues of mutual interest.

The meeting was also attended by Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah and Interior Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin Khalifah Al Khalifah.

Kuwait

Security Agreement With U.S. Finalized

LD2408143591 London KUNA in Arabic 0920 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Kuwait, 24 Aug (KUNA)—The deputy speaker of Kuwait National Council, Rashid Awad al-Juwaysiri, announced that Kuwait completed the final lines of the agreement to be concluded with the United States concerning its protection from any aggression, whether from Iraq or others.

Al-Juwaysiri said in a statement to AL-QABAS published today that the agreement would secure for Kuwait protection for 10 years starting from the date of its signing. He explained that the existence of such an agreement is a matter of great importance now, especially that the Iraq danger continues to threaten the security and safety of the region. He said that members of the National Council blessed this security agreement between the Kuwaiti and the American sides after it was submitted to the Council's concerned committees at last Thursday's session: the foreign affairs committee, the legislative committee, and the internal security and defense committee. They made remarks in relation to it before it finally would be brought before His Highness the amir, and the heir apparent and prime minister. He pointed out that there is a similar agreement to be concluded with Britain, according to which Britain would protect Kuwait's security for a similar period. However, he said this agreement has not been submitted to the Council because it is still being drafted and prepared.

Further on Security Accord

NC2608111991 Paris AFP in English 1051 GMT 26 Aug 91

[By Michel Moutot]

[Text] Kuwait City, Aug 26 (AFP)—Kuwait and the United States are putting the finishing touches to a security agreement guaranteeing American protection for the emirate only days before U.S. troops start their scheduled pullout, diplomats said here Monday.

They did not provide details of the accord but a Western diplomat said the agreement "should not include the creation of American military bases in the emirate."

The U.S. military pullout from Kuwait is due to begin on September 1.

A U.S. Embassy spokesman has confirmed the 3,700-strong armoured infantry regiment currently deployed in Doha, northern Kuwait, would be returning to its base in Germany "sometime in September."

The troops will have completed a 90-day mission in Kuwait as part of U.S. efforts to consolidate security in the emirate after American troops led a coalition of Western and Arab forces in February to end seven-months of Iraqi occupation.

A European diplomat said it was "highly probable that an intermediary solution between Kuwait and the United States would be found to ensure a dissuasive presence without permanently deploying troops."

"This is what the Kuwaitis want. American planes deployed in the Gulf are only 10 minutes flying time away, but it is still too far for them," the diplomat said.

Western military experts expect Kuwait to be largely dependent on foreign assistance for defense matters for several months if not several years until it completes the reconstruction of its armed forces.

"And even if they succeed in making an extraordinary defense effort their credibility will still be weak," one of the experts said.

"With a population of 700,000 people and no natural defenses, they have no hope of putting up serious resistance to the Iraqi army. So what's left is an American umbrella just like the post World War II situation," he added.

Cabinet Welcomes Return of Stability in USSR

LD2508161691 London KUNA in Arabic 1348 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Excerpt] Kuwait, 25 Aug (KUNA)—The Kuwaiti Council of Ministers expressed its satisfaction at the recovery by the Soviet Union of its stability under its legitimate leadership; it lauded the positive and effective role played by President Mikhail Gorbachev in supporting Kuwait's right.

Dari 'Abdallah al-'Uthman, minister of state for cabinet affairs, declared this in a statement following the weekly meeting of the Council of Ministers held today under the chairmanship of Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Sabah, heir apparent and prime minister.

Minister al-'Uthman said that the cabinet discussed the latest developments in the Soviet Union and their implications for Arab and international affairs after the return of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to power and the failure of the coup attempt by communist hardliners last week.

He added that the Council of Ministers expressed its satisfaction at the recovery by the Soviet Union of its stability under its legitimate leadership and it wished the friendly Soviet people increased progress and prosperity. It asserted the importance of the Soviet Union's role as a great power in supporting the new world order and in dedicating its directives toward realizing justice, peace, and stability in the world. [passage omitted]

Delegation Departs To Retrieve Airliners in Iran

LD2508125391 London KUNA in Arabic 1205 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] Kuwait, 25 August (KUNA)—A Kuwaiti delegation from the Foreign Ministry and Kuwaiti Airlines is getting ready to leave for the Islamic Republic of Iran to supervise the return of six "Airbus" airliners the Iraqi regime seized and later flew to Iran during the war of the liberation of Kuwait.

A member of the board of Kuwaiti airlines, Ahmad al-Mishari, told KUNA that the delegation of officials from the Foreign Ministry and technical experts from Kuwaiti Airlines is finalizing travel formalities and getting ready to go to Iran as soon as possible to examine the planes.

Al-Mishari was commenting on press reports saying that Iran's President Hashemi-Rafsanjani ordered the return of six Kuwaiti planes seized by the Iraqi regime during its occupation of Kuwait and later sent to Iran.

Al-Mishiri pointed out that efforts are being made by the Kuwaiti Government to follow up the process of returning the stolen Kuwaiti planes.

He explained that the Kuwaiti Foreign Ministry is making efforts in collaboration with the United Nations and is conducting direct contacts with the Government of Iran concerning the recovery of the planes.

He noted that the circumstances and the atmosphere are currently suitable for completing the process of retrieving the planes.

Minister Departs for Tour of GCC States

LD2508141491 London KUNA in Arabic 1019 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Excerpt] Kuwait, 24 Aug (KUNA)—Shaykh Salim al-Sabah al- Salim, deputy Kuwaiti prime minister and foreign minister, left Kuwait this morning for Saudi Arabia on the first leg of a tour that will cover the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] member countries. He is carrying messages from the amir of Kuwait, Shaykh Jabir al-Sabah, to the leaders of these countries.

The important messages to the GCC leaders from the amir of Kuwait cover the efforts being exerted to bring pressure to bear on the Iraqi regime to ensure its implementation of all the UN Security Council resolutions that pertain to Kuwait's demands, particularly its demands for the immediate release of all the Kuwaiti detainees and POWs the Iraqi regime still holds.

Dahri 'Abdallah al-'Uthman, minister of state for cabinet affairs, and Finance Minister Nasir 'Abdallah al-Radwan will carryout similar tasks in other Arab countries. [passage omitted]

Report on Messages Delivered

NC2608111091 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1000 GMT 26 Aug 91

[Text] Manama—Shaykh Salim al-Sabah, deputy prime minister and foreign minister and private envoy of his highness the amir, met in Manama this morning with Bahraini Amir His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah and handed his highness a message from his highness the amir on current efforts being made to press the Iraqi regime into implementing all UN Security Council resolutions connected with Kuwait's demands, particularly the immediate release of all Kuwaiti POW's being held by the Iraqi regime and marking the borders between Kuwait and Iraq.

The foreign minister delivered a similar message from his highness the amir to Qatari Amir His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani during a meeting with the Qatari amir's deputy and heir apparent, His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani in Doha this morning.

Iraqi 'Infiltrators' Arrested 22 Aug

LD2508120191 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1050 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] Kuwait, 25 August (SPA)—It was officially announced here that the Kuwaiti Defense Ministry arrested a number of Iraqi infiltrators in the border area between Kuwait and Iraq last Thursday.

A responsible source at the Kuwaiti Defense Ministry, in a statement carried by KUNA at noon today, said that "the Iraqi infiltrators were arrested while they were collecting ammunition left behind by the defeated enemy forces in the border area."

The source explained that the infiltrators were referred to the authorities concerned to interrogate them, and noted that the ammunition they had collected were taken to one of the gathering points of the defense ministry.

The Kuwaiti source said: "The bad condition of the ammunition and the method used in collecting it caused an explosion on one of the armored vehicles carrying ammunition on Saturday evening."

The source added at the end of the statement that the incident did not cause any casualties or loss of life.

Minister Briefs Cabinet on Recent Travels

NC2508192691 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1700 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Excerpt] The cabinet held a meeting this morning under His Highness Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, heir apparent and prime minister.

Dari 'Abdallah al-'Uthman, minister of state for cabinet affairs, briefed the cabinet on the results of his recent visits to Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Somalia, and Djibouti as directed by his highness the Amir of Kuwait, may God protect him. Al-'Uthman said that he gave messages from his highness the amir to the leaders of these states concerning the efforts being made to force the Iraqi regime to implement the UN Security Council's resolutions pertaining to Kuwait's just demands and release the prisoners and detainees held by the Iraqi regime.

The minister of state for cabinet affairs lauded the interest shown by the leaders and the senior officials of the states he visited and their eagerness to bolster efforts to support Kuwaiti rights and to ensure the full implementation of UN resolutions pertaining to Kuwait. He also praised the sincere efforts Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd al-Majid is exerting to gain the release of the innocent prisoners held by Iraq. [passage omitted]

Oman

Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Arrives for Visit

JN2508132891 Muscat Radio Oman Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Excerpt] His Highness Shaykh Salim al-Sabah al-Salim, Kuwaiti deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and his accompanying delegation arrived today on a visit to the Sultanate. The Kuwaiti foreign minister will convey a written message to His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id from his brother His Highness Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, amir of the State of Kuwait. [passage omitted]

Petroleum Minister on Discovery of Oil Fields

JN2508181391 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1726 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Excerpt] Muscat, 25 Aug (WAKH)—Omani Petroleum and Minerals Minister Sa'id Bin-Ahmad al-Shanfari announced the discovery of new oil and gas fields in various areas of the Sultanate of Oman.

In a statement during an inspection visit to the al-Khuwayr development project, 350 km southwest of Muscat, al-Shanfari said that work in under way to develop these fields and that there are encouraging prospects for oil, pointing out that 70 fields are currently producing oil in the Sultanate.

Regarding the quantity of the oil being produced, al-Shanfari said that the Sultanate is producing 700,000 barrels per day, voicing his hope that this quantity will increase in coming years and achieve the desired goal. He also stressed that the coming years will be full of glad tidings.

The minister also said that by developing the al-Khuwayr oil field, which is considered the most productive field in the Sultanate of Oman, 100,000 barrels can be produced each day . [passage omitted]

Saudi Arabia

Government Resumes Aid to Soviet Union

LD2408214191 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2045 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Riyadh, 24 Aug (SPA)—Moscow radio's 1800 GMT news bulletin today said that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia resumed providing the loan to the Soviet Union after this aid was suspended as a result of the attempted coup.

The radio said that the custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz al Sa'ud, had sent a telegram of congratulations to President Mikhail Gorbachev and to Boris Yeltsin, president of the Russian Republic, on the occasion of foiling the rebellion.

It is worth mentioning that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia suspended the aid to the Soviet Union soon after learning of the rebellion that took place at dawn on Monday, 19 August 1991, and then allowed the loan to go ahead as previously arranged after the coup was foiled and President Gorbachev returned to the presidency and resumed his duties.

King Fahd Receives Kuwaiti Amir's Message

LD2508142991 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1443 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Jeddah, 24 Aug (SPA)—King Fahd Bin-'Abd-Al-'Aziz al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, may God keep him safe, received a letter from his brother, His Highness Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait.

The letter was delivered to the custodian of the two holy mosques by His Highness Shaykh Salim al-Sabah al-Salim, Kuwaiti deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs, during a reception with his accompanying delegation by the dearly beloved king in his office at Al-Salam Palace today.

The reception was attended by Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz al Sa'ud, second deputy prime minster, minister of defense and aviation, and inspector general; Muhammed Ibrahim Mas'ud, acting Foreign Minster, minister of state and cabinet member; Mr. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Bakr, Kuwaiti ambassador to the Kingdom.

Deputy Minister Meets Afghan Resistance Figure

LD2508141191 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 1449 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Riyadh, 24 Aug (SPA)—His Royal Highness Prince 'Abd-al-Rahman-Bin-'Abd Al-'Aziz, deputy minister of defense and aviation and inspector general, received His Excellency the Foreign Minister of the Provisional Afghan Government, Professor Burhanuddin Rabbani, and an accompanying delegation this afternoon at His Highness's office in Riyadh.

During the meeting they talked about issues of common interest.

United Arab Emirates

Kuwaiti Minister Delivers Letter to Amir

JN2608061091 Manama WAKH in Arabic 2039 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] Abu Dhabi, 25 Aug (WAKH)—His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan Al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates [UAE], received a letter from the amir of Kuwait, Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, dealing with bilateral ties and matters of mutual interest.

The letter was delivered when Kuwait's deputy prime minister and foreign minister Shaykh Salim al-Sabah al-Salim called on his highness the UAE president this evening.

Shaykh Salim conveyed the appreciation of the amir and the government and people of Kuwait for Shaykh Zayid's genuine and consistent support during the Gulf crisis and for the role played by his highness together with the government and people of the UAE until the liberation of Kuwait and the reinstatement of legitimacy there.

The Kuwait foreign minister has since left Abu Dhabi for Doha in the course of a tour of member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Hammadi Rejects 'Any' Results of Conference

JN2508151791 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1437 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] Baghad, 25 Aug (INA)—Prime Minister Dr. Sa'dun Hammadi stressed Iraq's firm, principled position on the Palestinian question, the primary issue of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party's struggle.

In a statement to INA today, he said: Our position is based on the fact that Palestine is an Arab country and that the Zionist presence in it is only another form of the colonialism that has taken place in many parts of the world.

Dr. Sa'dun Hammadi added: Iraq is struggling with all its strength to liberate Palestine, and its pan-Arab policy is a long-term one that will not change with the change in its particular circumstances and those of the world.

Regarding Iraq's position on the so-called settlement conference to be held in October, Prime Minister Dr. Sa'dun Hammadi said: This plan is another form of the Camp David accords, except that it comes on a larger scale than the bilateral meeting that took place with al-Sadat. He said the conference is primarily designed to enable the Zionist entity to achieve its short-term goals by actually seizing the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem. He pointed out that Iraq's position on the first Camp David meeting is well known and added that, in light of this, Iraq's position on the second form of Camp David is self-evident.

Dr. Sa'dun Hammadi stressed that the Palestinian people are the only legitimate owners of all the Palestinian land and of their territories and properties, and that no one in the world has the right to wrest these rights from them, because the people living inside and outside the occupied land are the owners of Palestine, which is the homeland of the Palestinians and their forefathers. The Palestinian people, he said, have the right to repatriate, regain their property, determine their own fate, and establish their independent state, stressing that no matter how long it will take and no matter how the situation will evolve, no one in the world has the right to encroach upon these rights.

Dr. Hammadi said Iraq cannot recognize any other status for Jerusalem because it is an Arab city and is the capital of the state of Palestine, which will be established no matter how long it takes. Jerusalem is a holy city containing highly sacred Muslim and Christian places sanctified by the Palestinian people, the Arab nation, and Muslims around the world.

Dr. Hammadi renewed Iraq's support for, and full backing of, the PLO. He called on the Arab masses, Muslims, and the free people of the world to support the organization as the Palestinian people's sole legitimate representative, medium of struggle, and spokesman. Without the PLO, no negotiations will be relevant.

Concluding his statement, the prime minister stressed that Iraq will not recognize any outcome of the so-called settlement conference. He said the conference cannot produce anything out of harmony with the reality of the situation and the current balance of power. The results of the conference, therefore, serve the phased objectives of Zionism and colonialism. By no means will Iraq be involved in these results, and it will not recognize them.

Foreign Ministry Official Leaves for Tehran

JN2408065391 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0628 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Baghdad, 24 Aug (INA)—Foreign Ministry Under Secretary Sa'd 'Abd-al-Majid al-Faysal left for Tehran this morning at the head of a delegation on an official visit at Iran's invitation.

In a statement to INA, Sa'd al-Faysal said that the delegation will hold talks with Iranian officials on key issues between the two countries—foremost of which is the repatriation of Iraqi prisoners of war still held in Iran—with a view to reaching the proper solutions.

Al-Faysal affirmed that the talks would also focus on practical measures to prevent the formation of any new negative situations between the two countries, and also on efforts to exchange views on various issues of concern on the basis of mutual respect and noninterference in the other countries' domestic affairs.

The Foreign Ministry under secretary hoped that the visit would contribute to realizing practical measures to serve the interests of the two countries.

Minister Terms UN Resolution 706 'Immoral'

JN2508183291 Baghdad INA in English 1800 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] Baghdad, Aug. 25, INA—State Minister for Foreign Affairs Muhammad Sa'id al-Sahhaf described Security Council Resolution No. 706 as immoral and conceals suspicious political intentions behind false humanitarian slogans.

The minister, replying to a question by INA political commentator on the available information as regard the U.N. secretary general report on implementing this resolution, said no information are yet available on this report and the secretay general still has ten days to prepare his report.

The minister said that any reasonable man, thoroughly studying the Resolution 706 would come to clear results that it is a resolution that could not be implemented in accordance with the international law and the U.N. Charter.

The minister stressed that the real and clear meaning of the resolution was the imposition of new oppressive conditions on Iraq and new financial sanctions that have no legal justification and also placing a complicated process the objective of which putting Iraq's wealth and riches under a series of unjust restrictions meeting the brute foreign greeds.

The minister further said that the resolution endeavors to rescind the role of the Iraqi Government and its concerned institutions in running the affairs of the country and taking care of the interests of the Iraqi people.

Mr. al-Sahhaf stressed that the designs of those enemies would collapse thanks to the patience and steadfastness of the Iraqi people.

Memos to UN Protest U.S. Air Activity

21-23 Aug Flights

JN2508065391 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2115 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] New York, 24 Aug (INA)—U.S. aircraft continue to violate Iraqi airspace for surveillance and harassment purposes.

In a memorandum sent to UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar, the Iraqi permanent representative to the United Nations stated that U.S. air activity for 22-23 August totaled 15 air sorties, made up of seven two-plane formations and a single one-plane sortie.

The Iraqi delegate explained that the U.S. planes flew mainly over Dahuk, Mosul, Irbil, Tall 'Afar, Rawandoz, and al-'Amadiyah.

The Iraqi delegate earlier submitted a memorandum to Javier Perez de Cuellar on U.S. violations of Iraqi airspace for 21-22 August, when they carried out eight air sorties, made up of four two-plane formations. He indicated that the U.S. flights centered mainly over Irbil, Dahuk, northern Rawandoz, northern Mosul, and al-'Amadiyah.

23-24 Aug Sorties

JN2608055891 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2055 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] New York, 25 Aug (INA)—U.S. aircraft have again violated Iraqi airspace for purposes of surveillance and provocation.

In a memorandum to the UN secretary general, Iraq's permanent representative to the United Nations indicated that U.S. air activity inside Iraqi airspace for 23-24 August 1991 amounted to 17 sorties made up of eight two-plane formations and one individual sortie.

He explained that the enemy aircraft mainly overflew the Mosul, Irbil, Zakho, al-'Amadiyah, Rawandoz, and Dahuk areas, at an altitude of 2-5 km and at a speed of 700-850 km per hour.

Opposition Figure Criticizes Proposed Agreement

NC2508160991 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1427 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] Commenting on the announcement by Mas'ud Barzani, the chief negotiator in the Kurdish-Ba'thist negotiations, that his talks with the other side have been completed and that an autonomy agreement is ready despite the continued disagreement about Karkuk, Iraqi opposition figure Salah 'Umar al-'Ali, who lives abroad, told a foreign radio correspondent that any agreement not concluded under the aegis of real constitutional institutions will fail. Al-'Ali added that the current agreement between the Kurdish brothers and the treasonous regime in Iraq is a tactical, not strategic, agreement and is not based on either parties' long-term interests.

Salah al-'Ali, a former member of the Ba'th Party's regional command and a former Iraqi information minister, said that any agreement that does not include the formation of a national government which truly represents the people's will cannot be guaranteed. He added that the Kurdish movement is very important and influential, and that it has a significant political role, particularly in northern Iraq. He noted that it is very beneficial for the Kurdish movement to continue cooperating with other Iraqi opposition factions.

Certain Kurdish front figures and sectors of the Kurdish people disagree with the agreement, causing the criminal regime to besiege Karkuk with approximately 700 tanks due to its fear of Kurdish opposition to the negotiations. Some Kurdish refugees have sought refuge in the Australian Embassy to protest the negotiations.

The cities of northern Iraq have been the scene of demonstrations and protests against the deceitful regime.

200,000 Troops, 1,000 Tanks Reported in Karkuk

NC2508190991 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1712 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] Here is an update on the situation in Karkuk:

1. The authorities continue to send thousands of regular soldiers equipped with various types of weapons to the area. The number of Iraqi soldiers deployed inside Karkuk and its environs has exceeded 200,000 who are supported by 1,000 tanks. These forces have taken up offensive positions around Karkuk and it environs.

2. The authorities have intensified their security and military patrols inside Karkuk, and Iraqi troops are systematically storming houses and arresting citizens suspected of disloyalty and are picking up Kurdish and Turkomani youths from alleys and public streets, spreading an atmosphere of terror and fear. Many of these detainees are being tortured.

3. Prior to this spring's popular uprising, and as part of their racist plan to Arabize Karkuk and force the Kurdish citizens to leave the town, the authorities demolished 700 houses in the old railroad station area, an area inhabited by Kurds and Turkomans. Following the return of the government forces to Karkuk, the authorities demolished over 1,000 houses and shops in the (al-Surija) area opposite (al-Bazikhana).

4. The authorities are preventing Kurdish and Turkoman citizens from returning to Karkuk. They sent many families back to (Sharazur), al-Sulaymaniyah, and the border areas. The families that have managed to return to the town are being subjected to stringent measures and are being openly persecuted and denied food under the pretext that they do not have identification papers, which they lost with their money and property that were pillaged by government forces and mercenary settlers in Karkuk.

5. Due to the huge number of government forces deployed in the Karkuk area and the authorities' inability to provide them with food, the sight of troops knocking on doors begging for food has become common.

6. While the Kurdish delegation was holding negotiations with the Iraqi Government to reach an honorable agreement and a permanent peace—which Iraq is in dire need of—and according to official document No. 4/6410 dated 4 August 1991, issued by the Karkuk Municipality and signed by Hashim Hasan al-Majid, governor of al-Ta'mim, the Iraqi Government brought 2,726 retired Arab soldiers and officers to settle in Karkuk. Authorities gave them housing plots and financial aid on the condition that they not sell their houses for at least 20 years. The authorities are pursuing their policy of Arabizing Karkuk. This demonstrates the Iraqi regime's aggressive and racist intentions against the Kurdish people.

7. The authorities are holding seminars and government officials are making statements stressing that Karkuk and other Kurdish towns located in the so-called al-Ta'mim Governorate will not be included in the autonomous regions. This has created a state of fear and instability in Karkuk and its environs and has increased the fear of the homeless citizens, who still prefer to live in mountainous areas rather than returning to their houses under the regime's racist and repressive policy, which is being pursued earnestly. The government should have tried to normalize the situation in Kurdistan, particularly in Karkuk, which has suffered most from the Arabization process, the deportation of Kurdish citizens, and constant repression. Under these complicated and very delicate circumstances, the authorities are demonstrating their clearly intransigent position, represented by the massing of troops, the military preparations, the taking up of offensive positions, and the dispatch of heavy weapons and rockets to the region. Authorities have also been pursuing their repressive measures against non-Arab citizens.

Executions, Curfew Reported in Shatt al-'Arab

NC2308153591 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1425 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] Our heroic mujahidin from the rebellious popular forces continue their jihad against the criminal regime. The following are some of the operations they carried out throughout the country:

1. The following persons were executed:
   A. Lieutenant Colonel Zaydan Khalaf, commander of the 29th Regiment of the 12th Border Brigade.
   B. First Lieutenant Hashim Ziyarah Jasim, of the 20th Infantary Division.
   C. Criminal Iyad Hamid, from the city of al-Qurnah in al-Basrah Governorate.
   D. Criminal Fahd Muhammad, a member of a republican committee in al-Basrah.

A criminal officer with the rank of colonel in Qarmat 'Ali and an intelligence officer working in al-Basrah named 'Ali Husayn were also executed. In addition, a number of criminal Saddam's relatives, aides, and mercenaries died during the storming of the al-Sharq night club, located at the al-Nasr traffic circle in Baghdad.

2. A number of supply trucks and personnel carriers were destroyed along the al-Rumaylah- al-Nasiriyah-al-Basrah road.

The defeated regime has imposed a curfew in the Shatt al-'Arab region, particularly in the areas of Abu-al-Khasib and al-Faw, in anticipation of possible attacks by the brave mujahidin and in light of the regime's henchmen's great panic over and fear of our people's anger and their revolutionaries' revenge. These revolutionaries have taken it upon themselves to deliver just retribution to the agents and traitors of our proud Muslim people.

O our mujahidin: Rejoice in your heroic acts, and may God bless your mighty hands.

Rebels Said To Attack Saddam's Vacation Home

NC2408152591 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1425 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Excerpt] The heroic mujahidin of our victorious popular forces continue their jihad operations with the aid of God to destroy the strongholds of the mercenaries and the agents.

An attack has been launched against the den of the regime's henchmen located in the home of Samir Suwaylim, one of Saddma's close friends, in the Umm al-Shuwayf village in the al-Basrah governorate. The home was razed to the ground and a number of the mercenaries were killed, although some did manage to escape.

Criminal Saddam visited the very same village a number of times during the war with neighboring Iran and stayed in the same home for rest and recreation. [passage omitted]

Turkish Attacks Reportedly Kill Civilians

NC2308155991 Paris AFP in English 1526 GMT 23 Aug 91

[By Ragip Duran]

[Excerpts] Diyanah, Iraq, Aug 23 (AFP)—Scores of Iraqi civilians were killed or wounded in Turkish napalm attacks earlier this month against bases of Kurdish separatist rebels in northern Iraq, an Iraqi doctor here has said.

Wallat Ibrahim, producing photocopies of hospital registers, said 15 civilians were killed and 30 others wounded in the air and land operation which began on August 5.

He told AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE that an unspecified number of other civilians were killed and buried on the spot before a toll could be obtained.

According to Ibrahim, Turkish bombers attacked five villages in northern Iraq located some 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the international border.

Ankara has repeatedly denied charges by Kurdish groups in Iraq and foreign relief teams which have reported 20 civilian deaths from the first hours of the operation. [passage omitted]

Ibrahim said the Turkish aircraft also dropped napalm bombs, and visitors to the area could see two mountainous areas scorched and a village located near a base belonging to Turkish Kurdish separatist groups destroyed.

A leader of the Turkish Kurdish separatist guerilla movement, the Kurdish Workers Party, or PKK, said that a least 10 fighters have been killed or reported missing since the Turkish military operation was launched.

Osman Ocalan, the commander of a guerrilla camp in Diyanah, 10 kilometers (six miles) away from the border, said however the Turkish raids were ineffective, adding: "Life goes on and we are still here." [passage omitted]

According to Ocalan, the PKK has more than 20 camps along the 331-kilometer-long (205-mile) Turkey-Iraq border.

The guerrillas' arsenal consists of Soviet-made Kalashnikov assault rifles, American G-3 and M-16 rifles and rocket-propelled grenade launchers with most of the weapons seized from Turkish security forces and Iraqi troops, said Ocalan. [passage omitted]

Nearby, another fighter guarded seven Turkish army prisoners who were captured by the PKK on the night of August 3, during a rebel attack on a Turkish border post near the town of Semdinli.

Nine Turkish soldiers were killed in the raid and on August 5 the Turkish army launched its operation to search for and destroy rebel bases.

In interviews with AFP, the Turkish prisoners said they were well cared for but wanted to go home.

Rebel Leaders To Meet, Discuss Negotiations

NC2408145691 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Opposition in Arabic 1300 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] The Kurdish leadership will meet in Shaqlawah today to adopt a final position on the stalled negotiations with the defeated tyrant's regime.

Sources close to the Kurdish leaders who are negotiating with the tyrant's regime have said that the last round of negotiations, which began the second week of July, have failed. The Mas'ud Barzani-led Kurdish negotiating team recently returned to Shaqlawah.

Sources report that the delegation members say that tyrant Saddam Husayn has categorically rejected the Kurdish Front's demands to allow the Iraqi people to elect a constituent assembly to promulgate a permanent constitution. Saddam, however, has insisted that the draft constitution formulated by the command council two years ago be put to a referendum and that general elections be held on the basis of that constitution.

The sources report that the tyrant's delegation stressed that the Kurdish Front must recognize the tyrant's leadership and that the far-reaching powers he now enjoys must not be diminished. Sources indicate that other points of disagreement include the regime's insistence that the Yazidis are Arabs, not Kurds, and the regime's refusal to allow the establishment of a new Kurdish governorate combining the Kurdish districts of Khanaqin and Klar and their environs, where the majority of the population is Kurdish.

DPK Belittles Rival Faction's Statement

JN2408194991 (Clandestine) Voice of Iraqi Kurdistan in Arabic 1640 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Station commentary]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] The phenomenon that caught our attention was a statement printed in the Baghdad newspaper AL-'IRAQ on 15 August to mark the 45th anniversary of the Democratic Party of Kurdistan [DPK]. The statement was signed by the spuriously self-styled political bureau of the DPK. One cannot help being alternately outraged and amused by some of the phrases this group used to review the history, progress, and impressive achievements it has allegedly made for the Kurdish people—culminating in the historic March agreement between the Kurdish revolution's leadership, led by the immortal Mustafa Barzani, and the Iraqi Government. This group—over which a question mark often hangs and which in fact counts for nothing—poses as if it has earned the credit for this rich history and bright glory of the DPK. Over the past 16 years, it has never been able to catch anyone's eye. [Words indistinct] this handful of persons and their shaky organization—alien to the struggle and legitimate aspirations of the Kurdish people—have never been taken seriously by the Kurdistan people. This organization's members, cadres, and policies are hardly known to anyone. This shaky organization and other like-minded groups have assumed the sacred name of the [word indistinct] DPK—the party of the immortal Barzani and the masses of Kurdistan, the party of revolution, peace, and Arab-Kurdish brotherhood and national unity. [passage omitted]

What joke and irony! How will this handful of people look in the eyes of the world watching the struggler Mas'ud Barzani, head of the DPK, lead the delegation of the militant Iraqi Kurdish front to the Baghdad talks with the government with the hope of working out an acceptable and peaceful settlement to the Kurdish issue and a new law governing autonomy in Iraqi Kurdistan, and thrashing out the details of such concerns as democracy, party pluralism, freedom of the press, and other matters that failed to get any mention in the statement of the handful who impersonated the name of our party? This comes at a time when all the masses of Kurdistan are awaiting the result of these sincere efforts to promote a prosperous Iraq and Arab-Kurdish brotherhood, national unity, and safeguards against all threats. [passage omitted]

UN Inspector Views Chemical Weapons Destruction

NC2208165991 Paris AFP in English 1606 GMT 22 Aug 91

[By Mahir Chmaytilli]

[Text] Baghdad, Aug 22 (AFP)—Iraqi researchers are trying to develop a technique to destroy their chemical weapons in the sites where they were produced, a U.N. arms inspector said Thursday.

Colonel Jean-Paul Peroz, the head of the United Nations team charged with overseeing their destruction, said Iraqis had similar expertise to that of Western researchers to disarm bombs and missiles tipped with chemicals.

The site that the Iraqis are examining for destroying the chemical warheads is located about 100 kilometers (60 miles) northwest of Baghdad, he said. The Iraqis have named it after the al-Muthanna Company, but Western intelligence services know it as the Samarra' site after the neighboring city.

Al-Muthanna is spread out over 25 square kilometers (9.6 square miles) and is composed of 500 different workshops, including two for the production of organophosphoric material, like Sarin and Tabun, Peroz said.

One of the two workshops could be converted into a place for destroying chemical weapons, he said.

The technique currently studied consists of opening the chemical warheads in an enclosed area, burning the poison in an oven and filtering the resulting gases. Such a process conforms to international ecological norms, he said.

"The Iraqis have taken it upon themselves to make a destruction site with the help of the special (U.N.) committee responsible for disarming Iraq," the French colonel said.

Iraq "has a very good team of engineers, good equipment, and know-how comparable to that of industrialized countries," he said.

Al-Muthanna has stockpiles of 6,420, 22-millimeter rockets—each filled with 3.5 kilograms (7.7 pounds) of chemicals and which could be loaded onto multiple launchers, Peroz said.

There are several other chemical weapons storage sites in Iraq, he said, without saying how many there were exactly. Products made by the Iraqis to arm their shells are not pure, and many projectiles are ineffective. "The Iraqi storage areas are in fact garbage cans," he said.

The U.N. team has inspected three other sites in addition to the al-Muthanna plant: one used for making the component elements of harmful chemical agents, another for pesticides and the third which is incomplete. Allied aircraft bombed and destroyed these three sites during the Gulf war.

On Wednesday the U.N. experts visited the al-Habbaniyah airbase, 70 kilometers (42 miles) west of Baghdad, where they saw a storage facility for 200 mustard-gas bombs to be dropped from aircraft.

Peroz said before he left Baghdad Thursday that the "Iraqis have cooperated very well" with the U.N. mission and "provided all maps of their installations."

Sources Deny Sharon's Claims of U.S. Intentions

TA2508042591 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Excerpt] Sources close to Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir have dismissed the claim by Housing Minister Ari'el Sharon that the United States does not intend to sign a memorandum of understanding with Israel before the proposed October peace conference. Sharon said a foreign source told him that Prime Minister Shamir had been informed of the change in the U.S. position. [passage omitted]

Shamir: U.S. Upholds Promises on Peace Process

TA2508112191 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] Speaking at the cabinet session today, Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir said there has been no change in the promises the United States has made to Israel in view of the peace conference. Our political correspondent Arye Golan reports that Mr. Shamir made this remark in reply to Minister Ari'el Sharon's charge that the Americans have gone back on their promises.

In today's session, Minister Yuval Ne'eman of Tehiya demanded that Israel wait six months before advancing the peace process. Minister Rehav'am Ze'evi of Moledet called for the postponement of the peace conference in view of the events in the USSR, the Palestinian stand during the Moscow coup, and the Syrian opposition to Israel's participation in the regional water conference in Turkey.

The prime minister did not react to these demands.

More on Shamir's Comments

TA2508164491 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1600 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir says there has been no change in the positions of the United States or Israel with regard to the political process. Our political correspondent Arye Golan reports that this was Mr. Shamir's answer to questions posed by Minister Sharon during the cabinet meeting. Minister Sharon claimed he knows that the U.S. Administration is not prepared to honor commitments of previous administrations, such as President Ford's letter on the Golan Heights, since the Arabs do not agree to this. According to Sharon, the United States does not view the participation of a Palestinian delegation identified with the PLO as a cause for interrupting the talks. The prime minister replied that there has been no change in positions, although there are occasional disagreements between Israel and the United States.

Foreign Minister David Levi believes the political process should not be stopped or suspended as a result of events in the USSR. He thinks the renewal of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union will be accelerated now that conservative elements in the USSR have been removed.

Shamir's Peace Policy Said 'Not Very Clever'

TA2508100191 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 25 Aug 91 p B1

[Editorial: "The Train Should Not Be Held Up"]

[Text] The new condition spelled by Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir in an interview with YEDI'OT AHARONOT last Friday, making Israel's participation in the peace conference hinge on the establishment of full relations between Jerusalem and Moscow, was not very clever. It reawakened suspicions that Yitzhaq Shamir will use any excuse not to send an Israeli delegation to the conference. Those who are suspicious of him, and there are quite a few of them, were not overly impressed by his self-righteous wish that matters progress as had been planned prior to last week's events in the Soviet Union.

The media attributed to Jerusalem the assessment that the opening of the conference will be delayed by what happened in Moscow. Such an assessment is not totally unfounded. For example, if the Soviet foreign minister—the representative of one of the main sponsors of the conference—were forced to leave his job because of doubts about the position he took (or did not take) during the three days of the crisis, the opening could indeed be postponed. Other changes resulting from the abortive coup could also force a delay. However, Israel should not be the one raising questions on this issue. It should let these matters be clarified first in the Soviet Union and later by both the Soviet Union and the United States.

Moreover, it would be surprising if Israel were to link its participation in the conference to that of the Soviet Union. As far as we are concerned, the U.S. presence is what provides the external sponsorship to what we think should be a face-to-face meeting of representatives of Israel and the Arab countries. The Soviets were included among the sponsors as an afterthought, mainly to heed the pleas of the Arab countries and the United States.

As far as the sponsors are concerned, the Israeli Government's real attitude toward the conference is evident in two fundamental facts. First, it perceives the opening conference as a ceremonial act. Israel considers the meetings of the bilateral working committees, which will discuss issues in dispute between ourselves and the Arab countries, the main justification for such a conference. Second, the Israeli Government emphasizes its bilateral negotiations with the United States. The give-and-take over the memorandum of understanding is meant to attain an accord between Jerusalem and Washington, not between Jerusalem and Moscow or Brussels and New York (where UN headquarters fare located). This attests to our government's realistic perception of the balance of power and, consequently, of the influence of its sponsors.

Recognition by the Soviet Union, which has not yet recovered from the deep shocks it suffered last week, of Israel the day before, the same day, or the day after the opening conference is a question of diplomatic etiquette (and Moscow's understanding of its own interests). As far as Israel is concerned, the decision to participate in the conference has already been made—to wit, the prime minister's announcement of 31 July and the Israeli Government's official resolution a few days later. If some questions remain open, they should be discussed between Israel and the United States, without the intervention of external elements. Therefore, for our part, there should be no reason to postpone our participation in a conference at any agreed date. Logic and Israel's practical preparations for our participation in the conference tell us that the outstanding issues between the Soviet Union and Israel do not belong here. The train has left the station, and it should allowed to travel the route planned for it.

Peres Urges Immediate Recognition of Baltics

TA2608093991 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew
0825 GMT 26 Aug 91

[Telephone interview with Labor Party Chairman Shim'on Peres by Rafi Reshef—live]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] [Reshef] Mr. Peres, what are the factors, from Israel's perspective, for and against the immediate recognition of the Soviet republics which have declared independence?

[Peres] I think Israel should support independence for the Baltic republics, which are not an organic part of the USSR. They are the result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop treaty, and there is no reason for us to sanction that treaty. It was a foul agreement.

[Reshef] Is the Ukraine different, in your view?

[Peres] The Ukraine and Russia have been together for ages and are therefore a different story altogether.

Allow me to make a more general statement: Once, the superpowers held all the power; today, strength lies in weapons. These days, what makes a superpower is nuclear capability. What the world fears is that some republics—possibly including the four Muslim ones—which have missiles and nuclear capability, will secede and exist without central control, liberal spirit, and comprehensive responsibility. This matter requires extremely cautious handling. [passage omitted]

[Reshef] If I understand you correctly, Knesset Member Peres, you would immediately recognize the Baltic republics' independence, were you prime minister.

[Peres] Yes, absolutely.

[Reshef] Are you one of the first to take this attitude?

[Peres] One should sometimes take a moral stand, as opposed to the constant utilitarian approach taken by countries. These republics were annexed to the USSR against their wishes, as a result of a foul treaty. Even in political life, moral decisions should be made. For example, some people here remained silent when Yanayev usurped the power. What kind of moral strength is that? It would have been a disaster for the Soviet Union had Yanayev and his accomplices taken over that enormous nuclear arsenal, that vast superpower. They would have taken the Soviet Union back to the Dark Ages. We are not neutral people; we cannot take a neutral stand on issues of good and evil. We cannot make the State of Israel into a uniquely utilitarian country, because if Israel itself is judged in utilitarian terms, I don't know how many friends we will have left. Immediate material gain is not what it is all about. [passage omitted]

Government 'Waiting' on USSR Republics Stance

TA2608062491 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew
0500 GMT 26 Aug 91

[Report by political correspondent Natan Gutman]

[Text] Arye Levin, the Israeli consul in the USSR, is due to arrive today to participate in discussions of the new situation in the Soviet Union. One central issue to be raised is Israel's stand vis-a-vis the Soviet republics which have declared independence. So far, Israel has not decided on its position, although a dominant guideline can be indicated: Israel will neither initiate nor lag behind others. Israel will act in accordance with the positions of the United States and the West European mainstream.

However, sources in Jerusalem note that when deliberating on its attitude, Israel has to take into account unique considerations absent from the calculations of other Western countries. These are the continuation of free immigration from the Soviet Union and advancing the peace process. The fear is that premature recognition of the republics will result in a rift with the central regime in Moscow, which is liable to harm aliyah and the peace process. Conversely, belated recognition may anger the independent governments and harm aliyah from these republics.

Therefore, Israel is waiting to see what course the United States will take on this issue. As always, Jerusalem will act accordingly.

Moda'i Congratulates Gorbachev on Return to Post

TA2408081591 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew
0800 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Finance Minister Yitzhaq Moda'i sent a congratulatory cable to Mikhail Gorbachev on the occasion of his return to office. Our correspondent Menahem Friedman reports that the cable states that the Israeli people followed events in the USSR with apprehension and now hope that President Gorbachev will continue to promote his country's interests.

Israel's Sharon Against Attending Peace Conference

TA2408100091 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 0805 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Telephone interview with Construction and Housing Minister Ari'el Sharon by 'Adi Talmor on the "In the Current Situation" program—live]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Talmor] Could you try to give us an assessment of how things will shape up now in the international sphere or at least in the USSR?

[Sharon] I do not want to make any assessments. None of us knows what will happen. I believe though, that the process of democratization, once begun, cannot be stopped. This may be one of the greatest achievements of the United States. I was also glad to hear President Bush discuss the importance of democratization. One should only remember that what is good for the United States is also good for us. Those who think that democratization, true democracy, in the Soviet Union is important for maintaining peace world-wide should understand that the same applies to our region too. What is good for the United States should also be good for us. Therefore, I have constantly demanded that we begin with substantive issues rather than deal with procedural matters. One of the demands I have repeated is that, before we approach a political process during which Israel will adopt risky moves, we must see at least the beginning of a process of democratization in the Arab countries.

[Talmor] In view of this, I would say, Mr. Sharon, that the success of the coup in the USSR might have been precisely the event that could have led to the materialization of two of your hopes: a delay or a cancellation of the peace conference, and a panicky flight of Jews to Israel. This has not happened. Are you disappointed?

[Sharon] You are greatly mistaken if you think for even a single moment that I had hoped the coup in the USSR would succeed. I would have considered this as a very serious development. Israel's future largely depends on the most correct relations possible among the Eastern Bloc, the USSR, and the United States. The previous relations were a major cause of the wars for which we have paid an extremely high price.

[Talmor] Still, this also leads to what you do not want, this conference which you term a field court-martial.

[Sharon] I had hoped this coup would fail, and I now hope it will not be repeated. We do not know what upheavals can still occur in the USSR, but I hope this will not recur. Nevertheless, even before this coup, I demanded that we not go to this international conference. We saw what happened during the coup, and we see that we are dealing with undemocratic regimes—in fact, merely with shifting sands. Therefore, I demand now as well that we reassess matters, that we not rush anywhere but rather that we reassess the situation and insist that, before any negotiations begin, the countries that will participate in the negotiations announce that they will stop the arms race. We should also see the beginning, at least, of democratization. Then we can begin to talk.

I also believe that Israel in fact made a big mistake in giving a positive answer on the international conference before concluding a whole series of issues with the United States. We had expected a memorandum of understanding. Here I am referring to those who had wanted this because I knew, right from the beginning, that this was an erroneous move that would not lead to peace—to reach peace we need to go for another, different move. Still, Israel had expected a memorandum of understanding. This was, in fact, reported in the cabinet, but as I learned from foreign sources, the United States has already given a negative answer and does not intend to sign a memorandum of understanding with Israel about previous agreements and a whole series of issues. It intends to settle for a letter, and this surely runs counter to the Israeli Government's stance. We gave our consent to the international conference when it was clear to us that previous agreements, the accord with Lebanon, for instance, would be honored. As I know today, again from those foreign elements, the Americans are backtracking on this.

We gave our consent to go to this very dangerous international conference on the condition, for one, that if the Palestinian delegation announces in the course of the negotiations that it represents the PLO, both Israel and the United States will quit the deliberations. Again, the cabinet was not briefed on this, so I am making a somewhat qualified statement here, but, as I heard from these reliable foreign elements, the U.S. position today is different. A message the prime minister has received already says something else, stipulating, first, that the United States will not quit in such a case, and second, that the United States does not view such a situation—in which the Palestinian delegation declares that it represents the PLO—as sufficient cause for Israel to quit the conference. These are only some of the terms which, so it was greatly hoped, should have been but are not being fulfilled.

[Talmor] What you have just revealed contradicts what Foreign Minister David Levi is continually declaring, that all understandings and agreements with the United States in preparation for the convening of the conference are solid and unchanged.

[Sharon] Look, I do not want to deal with other peoples' statements. I am telling you what I know and cannot elaborate any further. I do not want to address myself to people who are seized with fits of joy in light of very dangerous situations. I am referring to a very serious matter, to very serious and complex problems that Israel is facing, and my proposal to the government is to pause for a moment, to reassess matters, and to come up with demands on substantive issues, such as those I have mentioned. [passage omitted]

Paper Praises 'Maturity' of PLO Reaction to Coup

TA2308105991 Tel Aviv 'AL HAMISHMAR in Hebrew 23 Aug 91 p 11

[Commentary by Pinhas 'Inbari: "Middle East Score Card"]

[Excerpts] The coup attempt in the Soviet Union raised numerous question marks but surprisingly only served to underline the exclamation marks around the Middle East peace conference. The coup leaders were very busy attempting to consolidate their rule, so we cannot point to any explicit statements; however, there is more than one sign, that even though they spent most of their time trying to save their necks, they did devote some thought to the Middle East, with their guiding policy line leaning more toward continuity than change. [passage omitted]

The crisis in the Soviet Union drew up a kind of score card of who supported and who opposed the new world order. This score card showed a power division that differed from the alignment of forces during the Kuwait crisis. The "coalition" against Saddam Husayn maintained its unity. Egypt led the support for Yeltsin while Syria maintained silence but clarified through commentaries on Damascus radio that it still supported the peace conference. This means (contrary to perceptions in Israel) that Syria does not want the cold war to resume. Jordan spoke in two voices: The Jordanian press rejoiced and took the side of the reactionaries, while King Husayn expressed deep concern for the future of the Soviet Union as a superpower and did not disguise his hope that the Middle East peace process would not grind to a halt. [passage omitted]

A similar split occurred among the Palestinians. The East Jerusalem press generally expressed satisfaction with Gorbachev's ouster, thus reflecting the authentic feelings of the Palestinians in the territories. They did not express regret about the danger to the peace conference and preferred a return to the old superpower balance—or in other words, the resumption of the cold war. The only PLO official to be led astray by the sentiments in the territories was Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, who is perhaps closer than the other PLO Tunis officials to the popular feelings "inside." The official Palestinian news agency, WAFA, did not issue any statements. 'Arafat kept quiet, and so did the PLO leadership, especially the Fatah organization ('Abd-Rabbuh heads a department in the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine).

In contrast to the glee in the territories, the PLO leadership in Tunis displayed a high degree of restraint and responsibility that greatly improved its image, which had been tarnished by the Gulf crisis. This time President Bush did not include the PLO with the "bad guys"—Cuba, Iraq, and Libya—who expressed pleasure with Gorbachev's (temporary) downfall. The PLO showed itself to be more moderate and politically mature than the notables in the territories and thus restored the balance between the "inside" and the "outside" which had tilted in favor of the "inside" after Kuwait. Faysal al-Husayni saved the standing of the "insiders" with the balanced positions he adopted upon returning from London, unlike Hannan 'Ashrawi, who expressed the hope that the Soviet Union would serve as a "moral" balance to the United States without returning the cold war. Al-Husayni refrained from any comments about the "balance of power." He said that the return of the Soviet Union is important to the Palestinians because they consider it their friend and expressed his hope that the affair would end without bloodshed. His prudent attitude brought an immediate response when Soviet Consul General Aleksey Chistyakov invited him to visit Moscow, thus maintaining the balance between "inside" and "outside" that was about to be disrupted by the lack of maturity shown by the residents of the territories while al-Husayni was abroad.

By the way, a similar pattern took hold in Israel—Sharon rushed to oppose the new rulers, and thus represented the authentic positions of the right-wing, while Shamir said nothing. Shamir was perhaps secretly hoping that the Soviet drama would bury the peace process but hastened to stress his commitment to the peace conference as soon as it became clear that it was curtains for the conspirators.

Shamir, at any rate, will have to bow to a new reality. The PLO and al-Husayni displayed more maturity than the "territories," and this does not help Shamir's demands that the delegation be made up solely by residents of the territories, without East Jerusalem. The expected delay in the opening of the conference gives more time for a discussion of Shamir's demands, with greater consideration given to the status of the PLO and East Jerusalem, especially now that the PLO is expected to publicly endorse something that has already been agreed upon in behind closed doors—a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Notables Invited to Soviet Union

TA2308114891 Tel Aviv DAVAR in Hebrew 23 Aug 91 p 3

[Report by Mikhal Sela']

[Text] Radwan Abu-'Ayyash left for Moscow two days ago after receiving an official invitation from the Soviet consul general in Israel. In the course of the visit Abu 'Ayyash will meet with senior Soviet officials. There had been plans to invite Abu-'Ayyash and other Palestinian notables even before this week's coup attempt, but the invitation was only published two days ago. Similar invitations were extended to other public figures, including Faysal al-Husayni, who returned from talks in London this week. Al-Husayni may go at a later stage, after his interrogation by the Petah Tiqva police is concluded on Monday.

Other notables who plan to leave for Moscow are Sa'ib 'Urayqat, an al-Najah University professor and one of the editors of AL-QUDS.

A group of Palestinian notables met with the Soviet consul two days ago in Tel Aviv and expressed the hope that the Soviet Union would support the Palestinians in the political process toward peace in the Middle East.

'Ashrawi Interviewed on USSR, PLO, Peace

TA2608085091 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 26 Aug 91 p 7

[Interview with Hannan 'Ashrawi by Jon Immanuel in Ramallah on 25 August]

[Text] Q: You were severely criticized in the Israeli press for your response to the coup. What is your response to that criticism?

A: I think very clearly that this criticism is a wilful, deliberate distortion and part of a smear campaign. There was deliberate misinterpretation of what I said, coming within an overall policy. I see the Foreign Ministry has come out with a campaign, again trying to slander Palestinians, trying to associate us with the coup.

At no point whatsoever did I support the coup. I made several statements which are very clear. The response that I got from Israelis and Palestinians alike was consistent, that this statement clarified the Palestinian position. We did not support the coup and we were for democratic change as the result of the will of the people only. Perhaps certain Palestinians did criticize me for being not supportive of the coup or for being too critical.

I said we do not want to got back to the Cold War era. There are serious changes in the Soviet Union which are irreversible and have to be supported.

Q: Left-wing groups in the PLO, those opposed to talks with the U.S., generally supported the coup. Do you think that will weaken their position within the PLO?

A: I think one thing the PLO has demonstrated is its versatility and its ability to accept diversity of opinion and pluralism if you wish. But, you see, the legitimacy and the credibility of any political group within the PLO is not just based on positions it takes vis-a-vis other developments outside the Palestinian scene. It is more intrinsic than that. It depends on their own legitimacy within their own constituency.

Q: If they have support within the Palestinian people they will retain their legitimacy regardless of their political point of view?

A: The people who have the right to hold them accountable and to question them would be their own constituency.

Q: You have been meeting with U.S. officials with some regularity now. Do you have some margin for decision-making?

A: So far there have been no decisions taken and everyone who has observed the peace process would know our duty at this stage is to explore...all the dimensions of the peace process and what it entails. So it's not a question of decision-making right now because the people who are empowered by the Palestinian people everywhere to take decisions are not individuals under occupation.

Q: In light of the past week's events in the Soviet Union, the U.S. in now more than ever the only superpower in the world. What influence will this have on the Palestinians?

A: The issues are not clear yet. The dissolution of the Communist Party apparatus is one thing, the fate of the Soviet republics is another. What's important is that this is part of a historically tremendously significant cataclysm, if you wish, in the Soviet Union. I think, frankly, that the momentum for peace has already been generated. I don't think that under any conditions will the Soviet Union withdraw from a peace process because it will be completely negative.

Q: Yasir 'Arafat went to Amman today after postponing his trip several times. Was he prompted by the Soviet events?

A: The timing could be coincidental. This is part of the process to coordinate an Arab position. If this trip had not taken place it would have been serious. We need a clear Arab position and a coordinated Arab position and a responsible Arab position in the peace process, so I think this is a positive move.

Q: Does 'Arafat's visit to Amman confirm his agreement to a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation?

A: I would say this is the beginning of an exploration of the possibility of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation but certainly should not be read as a total commitment to that. You don't commit yourself to a slogan or to abstract terms, you have to have substance to commit yourselves to. So if we get the proper substance internationally and with Jordan then you start discussing commitment.

Q: You would not advocate going to talks under any conditions?

A: Certainly not. We certainly would not accept positions which negate ourselves (our national rights) or would have within them the seeds of the destruction of the peace process.

Q: You live in Ramallah, but are often described as a resident of Jerusalem and therefore not a legitimate peace-talks delegate according to terms laid down by the government. What exactly is your status?

A: I have a Jerusalem ID. Jerusalem is my husband's home and I have an address there. Ramallah is my family's home so I have an address here. But let me tell you: Shamir's conditions are unacceptable.

Q: Many Palestinians say that you became a spokeswoman after your first appearance on ABC TV's Nightline, where you gave a very impressive performance in English and were considered an asset to the Palestinian public relations cause and they say this with some resentment.

A: People have the right to reach conclusions, but I don't think you will succeed in trying to place me on the defensive. This is something that is dealt with internally among Palestinians and the discussions are quite responsible and quite frank. Of course I think the Israeli press and the Israeli government will try to exploit any type of statement made by any Palestinian either to discredit individuals or to cast doubt on people.

The Palestinian side needs clear articulation, what Edward Said calls "the ability to narrate the Palestinian story" which has for along time been excluded from international public opinion. And I think at this stage it's very crucial that we do not try to neutralize each other's abilities, that people can work in different fields, in different areas and it is important that you have the proper person at the proper place doing the task most suitable.

Q: What are the different areas?

A: There are the political and the information areas, street activism, grassroots organization, intellectual area, all sorts of areas.

Q: Military areas?

A: No, certainly not. I am by my own personal commitment against any military solution, against any violence. Therefore I would not think in my discourse I have called in any way for any type of violence against individuals or groups. And I see the occupation as an extremely sophisticated and brutal form of violence.

Q: Do you think the solution to the problems of the Palestinians will be solved more easily in a world which seems to be moving towards a principled stand on behalf of democratic rights?

A: No question about it. I think the intifada itself is a cry for democracy, is itself a legitimization of democracy in the Arab world and to me there can be no just settlement as a result of coercion or power politics or self-interest.

Arens Adviser on Conditions for 'Ubayd's Release

TA2508043491 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] A personal representative of the UN secretary general visited Israel at the end of last week to discuss a prisoner exchange. The envoy, Giandomenico Picco, met with Israel's top negotiator Uri Lubrani and Foreign Ministry Deputy Director General Yohanan Bein. The Foreign Ministry spokesman would not divulge any details of the talks.

Dani Nave, senior adviser to Defense Minister Moshe Arens, says Israel would release Hizballah leader Shaykh 'Ubayd if the deal included Israel's missing seven servicemen in Lebanon. The defense minister's adviser was responding to an Iranian source who said U.S. hostage Terry Anderson or British church envoy Terry Waite could be freed if Israel released Shaykh 'Ubayd.

SLA, IDF Shell Shiite Villages in Lebanon

TA2508105991 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Excerpt] In the Shiite villages north of the security zone in Lebanon, tension between villagers and Hizballah terrorists is still high. The villagers are holding the terrorists responsible for the damage the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] and SLA [South Lebanese Army] caused there over the weekend. The armies shelled the villages heavily in response for Hizballah attacks. Our correspondent in the north Hayim Hecht reports:

A senior SLA officer told me this morning: Our shelling achieved exactly what we had hoped it would. We did not mean to hurt anybody or destroy houses. We wanted to warn the Shiite villagers that if the terrorists continue operating from their villages, their lives will be miserable.

Three SLA soldiers were killed over the weekend in Hizballah attacks. The SLA responded with full wrath. According to UN officers' count, more than 300 shells landed in the villages of Bra'shit, Jarju', Mlikh, and al-Luwayzah. Many of the residents who fled north during the shelling returned to find that at least 40 houses were demolished. In a spontaneous demonstration in Jarju' the villagers called on Hizballah to leave. During the heated demonstration, a Hizballah man was shot and killed. The Tyre Police reported that clashes and exchanges of fire continued there last night as well. A Lebanese Army unit tried to bring some order to the region but had little success. [passage omitted]

Baker To Visit, Finalize Conference Arrangements

TA2308183691 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Arabic 1630 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] Reports reaching Jerusalem indicate that U.S. Secretary of State James Baker intends to arrive in Israel in the second half of September to finalize arrangements for convening the peace conference and drafting the U.S.-Israeli memorandum of understanding. Sources told our correspondent Shlomo Ganor that they rule out the possibility of the peace conference's convocation at the beginning of October, as had been scheduled, due to the events that occurred in the Soviet Union this week.

The sources stressed that Israel adheres to its position on the need of the Soviet Union to restore its full diplomatic relations with Israel prior to the convocation of the peace conference.

Our correspondent adds that the Netherlands' foreign minister has officially proposed to Foreign Minister David Levi that the Netherlands host the opening session of the peace conference of the Middle Eastern countries.

Arens: '$1 Billion' More Needed for Defense

TA2608063091 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0405 GMT 26 Aug 91

[Report by Shula Schmerling on Defense Minister Moshe Arens' remarks at a Likud meeting in 'Akko on 25 August]

[Excerpts] Minister Arens does not conceal his rage, and even his habitually restrained tone changes and reveals his feelings on this festive celebration of the appointment of Knesset Member 'Ovadya 'Eli as deputy defense minister. We were told to learn the lessons of the Gulf war, the first and foremost of which was the potential damage to the home front, he says. Yet, when we presented our conclusions to the prime minister and the relevant ministers, we learned that the enemy we had to deal with was not the one we had expected, but rather a ministry supposed to be an associate and a partner—the Treasury. [passage omitted]

Arens adds: We will wage and win this battle, too, because we cannot afford to remain unprotected and to be short of answers. In a more detailed conversation after the ceremony, the defense minister says: To accomplish these tasks, money—a lot of money—is required, and I am fully responsible for what I am saying.

[Begin Arens recording] Speaking on behalf of the defense establishment, I will tell you that the defense budget must receive the addition of at least $1 billion in the coming year, if we are to provide a reply to the dangers this country and its inhabitants faced in the Gulf war. [end recording]

Those who disagree with this simply do not understand what defense is really about, he added. [passage omitted]

Arens Denies Conditions on Aircraft Purchase

TA2608094891 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 26 Aug 91 p A8

[Report by Eytan Rabin]

[Text] Defense Minister Moshe Arens yesterday denied the report published in several newspapers according to which the minister had said that Israel would only purchase planes from an American company that would help market the Lavi aircraft. The defense minister's media adviser said that Arens believes that the Lavi jet is the best of its kind in the world and that therefore aircraft manufacturers should be interested in producing the plane; however, the minister did not make the purchase of U.S. aircraft conditional on the production of the Lavi.

The Israel Aircraft Industries [IAI] yesterday said that reports that "IAI sources have claimed that there is no practical basis or plan to revive the Lavi project" do not reflect the IAI's position. The IAI management asserted that the IAI would not miss any business opportunity to renew the Lavi production, if and when this becomes an option, after examining prospective purchasers and funding and following an orderly debate by the various levels of management in the company subject to the directorate's instructions.

Paper Criticizes Arens' Attempts To Revive Lavi

TA2508082791 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 25 Aug 91 p A9

[Report by Re'uven Pedatzur]

[Text] Defense Minister Moshe Arens has not yet given up the idea of reviving the Lavi project and does not miss any opportunity to promote it. He did just that in the course of a meeting with the president of General Dynamics, manufacturer of the F-16. The first two F-16's, in a deal that includes 60 such jets, landed in Israel last week.

"I hope we will soon sign another deal to supply jets to your Air Force," General Dynamics President James Mellor told Minister Arens. To the astonishment of his audience, the defense minister replied that Israel would in the future buy planes only from U.S. firms that help market the Israeli Lavi fighter.

Mellor initially thought that Arens was joking, but when he realized that the defense minister was serious he and all those listening to their conversation were embarrassed.

Ever since assuming his job as defense minister, Arens has on countless occasions raised the revival of the Lavi project. He has reportedly been looking for foreign funding, because he knows it will be hard to allocate funds for the project from the defense budget.

Sources in Israel Aircraft Industries [IAI] argue that there is no practical basis for the plan to revive the Lavi. They believe the project is dead and note that any attempt to revive it will involve an unnecessary waste of funds. There will be no customers for a jet fighter like the Lavi, and even the Israeli Air Force will not be willing to buy it, the IAI sources say.

Military sources expressed astonishment at the defense minister's recurrent attempts to revive the Lavi project. According to them, at a time when the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] is wrestling with budget cuts and trying to find funds to purchase sophisticated weapons systems, it makes no sense to invest money in a jet fighter which, upon completion of development, will be outdated and offer no operational advantage to the IDF.

IDF sources fear that Minister Arens might decide to allocate funds to the Lavi at the expense of other projects which, they believe, are not only more important but also constitute a critical component in the IDF's procurement program over the next few years. The defense minister's obsession with the Lavi is incomprehensible and we hope it will not affect his decisions, the sources say.

Arab 'Terrorist Squad' Identified, Detained

TA2608055091 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 26 Aug 91

[Text] A terrorist squad was uncovered in the village of al- Tayyibah in the Triangle. Four suspects were detained: two from al-Tayyibah and two from Samaria.

The squad leader, an Israeli Arab, was recruited to Fatah during his hajj to Mecca. The terrorist group was equipped with large quantities of weapons and ammunition, and its tasks including firing at security personnel and setting cars on fire. They were detained before they could carry out their designs.

Commentary Analyzes Tension in Shin Bet

TA2308135891 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 Aug 91 p B1

[Commentary by Yo'el Marcus: "The Shin Bet Needs a Jostle"]

[Text] These days, one of the country's most important institutions is characterized by scurrying, foment, intrigue, suspicion, and mainly gloom. In the past three months, after the inquiry officer [Reserve Major General Refa'el Vardi] submitted his findings to the prime minister, the Shin Bet has been the object of numerous press reports and articles. The picture of the organization's high echelons, which emerges from the sum total of the reports, does not look good.

Shamir appointed Vardi to probe suspicions of what can be termed "esthetic flaws" in the conduct of the Shin Bet chief, which featured in two internal audit reports. One after the other, several senior Shin Bet officers were summoned to Vardi's bureau and found themselves answering embarrassing questions about their commander's menus, receipts, pastimes, and even bedroom. The Shin Bet chief himself was questioned—humiliatingly, in his view—about what he believed were trivial matters. Vardi, who held a different opinion, did not reach an unequivocal conclusion. After conveying his findings to Shamir, he said that according to his report, the Shin Bet chief can be either fired or not fired. This was not what one might call an easy recommendation for a prime minister who is not very fond of making decisions. The Shin Bet chief himself, who was hurt by the many hours of questioning during which he was asked about every receipt, as well as why he spent a certain night at a certain hotel and with whom, hurt by the refusal to name his subordinates who had testified against him and by the findings which neither convicted nor cleared him entirely, advised the prime minister of his intention to end his term in office.

The Shin Bet chief's friends contend that something snapped in him after this attempt to tarnish his reputation. Yet, on the other hand, although the findings were interpreted as if they cleared the chief, Shamir did not appeal to him to stay in office. Unlike the chief of the General Staff, the Shin Bet chief's tenure is of unlimited duration, and the rumor that he will leave next April, before a replacement has been appointed, did nothing to improve the atmosphere.

Recently, dozens of senior Shin Bet officers—many old-timers among them—were asked to take a polygraph test. The rumor says that the decision to freshen up the profile of commanders was made in principle a long time ago, but its implementation at this time calls for explanation. The kind of questions which the interrogated officers were asked with regard to ties and meetings with journalists supplied grounds for the claim that the Shin Bet chief is "settling accounts" with those subordinates who, he believes, had testified or had been behind the gossip against him.

In recent days, various newspapers and even local papers, have published reports which alleged that two or three senior officers, including one who had been amnestied in the Bus 300 affair [in which Shin Bet personnel stood trial for the death of Arab attackers of a civilian bus], are to be ousted soon. The papers also reported on internal "solidarity meetings" allegedly held in the Shin Bet, the participants of which expressed full support for the service chief. Both the reports and the odd meetings—a new and unsavory phenomenon in the Shin Bet—are more reminiscent of struggles in political parties than of working procedures in a service whose chief and operation are clandestine. A retired Shin Bet chief, coming out of a meeting of Shin Bet pensioners convened by the chief, provided the aptest expression: "I think I am going to throw up."

People working for the Shin Bet whisper about a "witch hunt" atmosphere. Some of them do not bother to conceal their fear that "the boss has decided to take along when he leaves all those he believes had testified against him." The recent reports that two senior officers were asked to retire voluntarily have been substantiated by fact. The spontaneous reaction of one of them was identical to that of the water commissioner [who refused to resign despite official pressure]: "I am not leaving; all you can do is fire me." In the end, unable to withstand the pressure, he took an academic leave of absence at the height of a successful career.

Some of the eight amnestied officers who still work for the service complained that their promotions have been halted. Although they were given new postings after the amnesty, their promotion was stopped by an invisible barrier. It will be recalled that during the unfortunate Bus 300 affair, Avraham Shalom—who was the Shin Bet chief at the time—claimed that he was acting "with the permission and authorization" of the prime minister. Shamir denied, and the enigma of who really gave the order [to kill the bus attackers] has remained unsolved to this very day. It is, however, patently clear that the subordinates acted with the permission and authorization of their commander. When the amnesty—which was rejected by some of the involved figures—was being "concocted," the prime minister promised that the involved personnel's respective careers in the service would not be affected. This promise, in the opinion of several officers, was not kept.

Retired Shin Bet officers are saying that although the service is functioning well, they do not remember such an atmosphere of tension and suspicion in the top echelons. It suffices for the prime minister to summon the Shin Bet chief for a private meeting to start a fresh wave of rumors and whispers.

The fact that a deputy to the Shin Bet chief has not been appointed in years does not make the situation any easier. The absence of a deputy on the one hand, and the premature obliteration of Shin Bet chiefs on the other, have resulted in the present lack within the service of a natural heir to the current chief. Thus, for the first time ever, an outsider will be appointed as the Shin Bet chief—a traumatic move in itself.

The outside race, with the various candidates working assiduously to acquire support, has augmented the tension among the top echelons and given rise to new apprehensions. The main fear has to do with the recent stampede of political appointments made by the Likud government. A political appointment to head this body, whose drawers store the files of tens of thousands of people, including politicians and public servants, is the nightmare of every pursuer of democracy.

There is an opinion that quite a few internal codes and norms of conduct were violated in the Bus 300 affair. Since then, they say, the Shin Bet has not recovered its former self. Maybe. Yet in this time of twilight in the supreme command, after two service chiefs were replaced and the third is on his way out within a six-year period during one prime minister's tenure, the Shin Bet clearly needs a serious jostle.

Officials Begin Preparation for 'Arafat Visit

PLO Delegates Arrive in Amman

JN2308174491 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1715 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Randah Habib dispatch from Amman]

[Text] PLO Executive Committee members Mahmud 'Abbas and Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh arrived in Amman this evening to prepare for PLO leader Yasir 'Arafat's visit to Jordan. This was confirmed to our radio by Palestinian Ambassador al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim.

The Palestinian officials are scheduled to meet with Jordanian Prime Minister Tahir al-Masri. 'Abd-al-Rahim said he expects 'Arafat in Amman within the next two days for talks with Jordanian officials on the developments in the peace process.

Prime Minister Comments

JN2508075191 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 25 Aug 91 pp 1, 14

[Text] Amman, SAWT AL-SHA'B—Prime Minister Tahir al-Masri declared that the invitations to the peace conference due to be held in October will contain stipulations on the commitment to the principle of international legitimacy to reach a comprehensive solution to the Middle East conflict on the basis of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

The prime minister stated that Jordan is currently waiting for U.S. assurances and replies to inquiries and questions posed in recent talks with a U.S. delegation so that they can be incorporated in a memorandum of understanding, especially regarding withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and viewing Jerusalem as an indivisible part of those territories.

During a meeting with a delegation of the Executive Council of the Jordanian Arab National Democratic Alliance [JANDA] yesterday evening, al-Masri touched on the Jordanian-Palestinian talks due to start after the arrival of Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat in Amman within the next few hours, and said that these talks will tackle in detail coordination between Jordan and the PLO with regard to peace efforts, the proposed peace conference, and the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation issue. He asserted that Jordan will not be a substitute to the PLO, and that everything that has to do with Palestinian affairs will be the responsibility of the Palestinians themselves.

The prime minister praised the results of the recent visit to Syria by His Majesty King Husayn, and also the talks his majesty held with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and Syrian officials as a prelude to further coordination among the Arab parties participating in the peace conference, and also subsequent meetings to discuss everything related to the peace efforts aimed at settling the Middle East conflict and adopting a unifed Arab stance.

During the meeting, the prime minister and the delegation reviewed JANDA's stance on the current peace efforts and affirmed their adherence to the constants governing the Jordanian position, with a view to reaching a just and durable solution to the Palestine question through the retrieval of the Palestinian Arab people's legitimate right to self-determination.

'Arafat To Discuss 'Joint Management'

JN2608064391 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 26 Aug 91 p 20

[By Tawfiq 'Abid]

[Text] Hani al-Hasan, Fatah Central Committee member, has said that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's visit to Jordan is particularly important, especially at this stage, because the final political or military decision is eventually an Arab one.

In an exclusive statement to AL-DUSTUR, al-Hasan said that the starting point for activating the Arab situation, in his view, always begins with a Jordanian-Palestinian understanding and coordination because the Jordanians and Palestinians are the ones directly involved in the current developments.

Al-Hasan added: Hence, this visit signals a PLO decision to open the file of a political settlement with fraternal Jordan to discuss the possibility of "joint management" of the dispute leading to the Arabization of the confrontation because the United States has laid tough conditions and made pledges to the Israelis which include no guarantees for a full Israeli withdrawal from the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967.

He said that the meeting between His Majesty King Husayn and 'Arafat will be the beginning of a series of meetings until a Palestinian-Jordanian paper is worked out to address all raised issues and to define the bases of a settlement and Palestinian representation, indicating that a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation is one of the options under discussion.

Hani al-Hasan, who arrived in Amman late last night, will take part in the dialogue which will be held with representatives from the Islamic Resistance Movement—Hamas—to persuade them to participate in the PLO institutions, especially the Palestine National Council.

PLO Position Described

JN2408075291 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 24 Aug 91 pp 1, 18

[By Sa'd al-Silawi]

[Text] Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine and PLO Executive Committee chairman, is expected to arrive in Amman in the next two days on a visit that will last several days for talks with His Majesty King Husayn and Prime Minister Tahir al-Masri.

The Jordanians and Palestinians are expected to review the current developments on the Palestine question, the proposed peace conference, and the shape of Palestinian participation in the conference.

PLO Executive Committee members Mahmud 'Abbas and Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh arrived in Amman yesterday evening to prepare for 'Arafat's visit. The two officials concluded a visit to Cairo during which they met with Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and other Egyptian officials.

'Abbas and 'Abd-Rabbuh will meet with Foreign Minister Dr. 'Abdallah al-Nusur, who said last week that 'Arafat's talks in Amman will clarify many objective matters related to the proposed peace conference.

A reliable Palestinian source attached great importance to 'Arafat's awaited visit, during which the i's will be dotted concerning Palestinian participation in the peace conference. The source told SAWT AL-SHA'B that the PLO still adheres to constant Palestinian principles and stresses the need for receiving the guarantees it asked Washington to provide, especially that the conference is convened on the basis of international legitimacy, particularly resolutions 242 and 338, which provide for immediate Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Palestinian and Arab territories, including holy Jerusalem.

The source asserted that the Palestinians are unanimous in their position that Jerusalem should not be excluded from the peace process.

According to another source, 'Arafat cannot approve Palestinian participation in the proposed peace conference if Washington fails to give the guarantees. If things reach a deadlock, added the source, 'Arafat will refer the subject to the Palestine National Council, which is scheduled, in principle, to meet mid-September.

A third Palestinian source told SAWT AL-SHA'B that Mr. 'Arafat will discuss with His Majesty King Husayn a possible meeting for the frontline states that will participate in the peace conference. The purpose of the meeting is to coordinate positions before convening the conference. The source says that Syria, which previously opposed the meeting, changed its position. Jordan, the PLO, Syria, Egypt, and Lebanon are expected to attend the meeting. Syria informed the Palestinian delegation headed by PLO Political Department Chief Faruq Qaddumi, which has recently visited Damascus, of its agreement to attend.

On another level, the Palestinian source attached great importance to Qaddumi's visit to China. Mr. Qaddumi is expected to ask Chinese officials to demand a role in the proposed peace conference because China is a permanent Security Council member state. The source believes, however, that the United States seeks to exclude China while the PLO stresses Chinese participation.

PLO Chairman 'Arafat Arrives for Talks

To Meet King Husayn

JN2508081691 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0800 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine and chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, arrived in Amman today. During his visit to Jordan he will meet with His Majesty King Husayn and a number of senior officials and hold talks with them on the latest Arab developments, the Palestine question, and peace efforts.

Yasir 'Arafat was received at the airport by a number of senior officials and the Palestinian ambassador in Amman.

King Agrees on 'Positive Approach'

JN2508153791 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] This afternoon at al-Nadwah Palace, His Majesty King Husayn received Yasir 'Arafat, president of the state of Palestine. His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hasan also attended the meeting.

The two sides reviewed the bases of the proposed peace process, and analyzed and assessed all its elements, which both the Jordanian and Palestinian sides had been informed about through contacts held recently with the United States.

The two sides agreed to continue consultations and exchange views on this issue with a positive approach toward the peace process, so as to provide the proposed peace process with conditions for its success to reach a just and permanent peaceful settlement on the basis of international legitimacy and its resolutions, particularly Resolution No. 242.

The meeting was attended on the Jordanian side by Prime Minister Tahir al-Masri, Royal Court Chief al-Sharif Zayd Bin-Shakir, the king's political adviser 'Adnan Abu-'Awdah, and Foreign Minister 'Abdallah al-Nusur. On the Palestinian side, the meeting was attended by PLO Executive Committee members Mahmud 'Abbas, 'Abd-al- Razzaq al-Yahya, Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, 'Abdallah Hurani, Sulayman al- Najjab, Muhammad Milhim, and Ilya Khuri, and the Palestinian ambassador in Amman.

PLO Stand on Delegation Queried

NC2508195691 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1840 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] Amman, 25 Aug (MENA)—An informed Palestinian source in Amman has emphasized that a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the peace conference is not expected to be formed during PLO Executive Committee Chairman Yasir 'Arafat's current visit to Jordan because 'Arafat wants to refer the matter to the Palestinian leadership before any decision is made.

In a statement to the MENA correspondent in Amman, the source noted that the PLO wants to send an independent Palestinian delegation to the proposed peace conference after it receives an official invitation from the conference chairman.

The Palestine National Council and the PLO Executive Committee would have to agree to send a joint Jordanian-Palstinian delegation to the conference, the source pointed out.

The source said that the statement issued at the end of the talks between King Husayn of Jordan and Yasir 'Arafat this afternoon did not contain any references to a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the peace conference, nor did it define a final stand on this matter. All doors, he added, have been left open.

Observers in the Jordanian capital expected the statement to define the type of coordination between the two sides during the coming period and to announce the formation of joint Jordanian- Palestinian delegation to the proposed peace conference.

No Final Decision on Delegation

JN2608090391 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 26 Aug 91 p 1

[By JORDAN TIMES staff reporters Lamis K. Andoni and Nirmin Murad]

[Excerpt] Amman—His Majesty King Husayn and Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Chairman Yasir 'Arafat held talks Sunday on efforts to convene an international peace conference and the possible formation of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian negotiating team.

The two sides, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, decided to "continue consultations with the aim of ensuring the success of the international peace conference and the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions, especially Resolution 242."

Foreign Minister 'Abdullah al-Nusur told the Jordan Times that the PLO had not delivered its final decision concerning a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to the conference.

"Clearly they have not taken a final decision but the process for taking the decision is under way," Dr. al-Nusur said.

He said that neither the Jordanian government nor the PLO were pressuring each other on any issue, but that both sides were seeking a basis for cooperation. "They are not here to press on us anything nor are we to press on them anything, but since the subject is of a joint delegation a common ground is needed," Dr. al-Nusur explained.

Well-placed sources close to Sunday's meeting said that the two sides had agreed to form an action committee to work out "a joint negotiating position."

The PLO, the sources said, is seeking a joint Jordanian-PLO negotiating position to serve as a nucleus for an Arab negotiating stance to enhance Palestinian demands for American guarantees.

Both Jordan and the Palestinians have been seeking guarantees from the U.S. government that the proposed October conference will lead to the implementation of Security Council resolutions calling for an Israeli withdrawal from the Arab territories occupied in 1967.

PLO officials have repeatedly indicated that the organisation's acceptance of a joint delegation hinges on the U.S. readiness to provide the Arab sides with guarantees of Israeli withdrawal and recognition of the Palestinian national rights.

A PLO source told the Jordan Times prior to Sunday's meetings that if Jordan and the PLO were able to reach a joint Jordanian- Palestinian position and there were guarantees that the international conference will aim at applying the U.N. resolutions, the form of Palestinian participation will not be an issue.

"We are more concerned about substantive issues rather than modalities," he said. [passage omitted]

Jordan-PLO Coordination Viewed

JN2608085391 Amman SAWT AL-SHA'B in Arabic 26 Aug 91 pp 1, 14

[Editorial: "The Jordanian-Palestinian Coordination Is a National and Pan-Arab Requisite"]

[Text] Jordan made substantial and important successes on the level of forging coordination and cooperation among the Arab frontline states and the PLO within the framework of the active Jordanian move, which His Majesty King Husayn began following the declaration of Bush's initiative and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's first tour of the region. This is considered a national and pan-Arab requirement.

King Husayn's first and second visits to Syria following the Gulf war realized substantial success that was described as extremely important. As for coordination between Jordan and the PLO, it was enhanced by the constant meetings and deepened by the continuing bilateral coordination. Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's current visit and his meetings with His Majesty King Husayn is aimed at finalizing a joint concept on the peace process based on an accurate analysis and frank evaluation of all elements of the U.S. initiative of which the two parties are now aware. There is a Jordanian-Palestinian agreement in principle on the need to continue consultations and exchange of views. This agreement is based on approaching the peace process positively with the aim of providing the factors and conditions that will ensure the success of the conference and the attainment of a comprehensive, lasting, and just settlement based on the international legitimacy resolutions, topped by Resolution 242.

Therefore, and after the success of the Jordanian-Syrian and Jordanian-Palestinian meetings, and after reaching a joint conviction on the need to agree on basic rules and principles to be adhered to in the negotiations with Israel under the U.S.-Soviet supervision in the proposed peace conference, it is possible to wager on the possibility of strengthening the Arab and Palestinian positions and on the possibility of speaking in one language that is committed to the principle of restoring the Palestinian and Arab rights and territories on the one hand, and keeping away from any unilateral or partial solution on any Arab or Palestinian front on the other.

The strength of the Jordanian-Palestinian coordination and its continuation and enrichment are due to Jordan's respect of the Palestinian people's will, represented by the PLO, their sole legitimate representative, and Jordan's support for the Palestinian people's struggle and their heroic intifadah in the occupied Arab territories.

What is important is that this coordination, toward which the Arab frontline states and the PLO have made substantial progress, should enable the Arab and Palestinian side to catch up with the quick pace of the peace settlement efforts and make full and successful preparation for participation in the peace conference.

'Arafat Departs

JN2608094091 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 0900 GMT 26 Aug 91

[Text] Yasir 'Arafat, president of the State of Palestine, left Amman early this morning at the end of a short visit to Jordan during which he held talks with His Majesty King Husayn and ranking Jordanian officials on the bases of the proposed peace process in the Middle East.

The two sides agreed to continue consultations and exchange of opinion on this issue, viewing the peace process positively with the aim of ensuring the success of the proposed peace conference.

'Arafat was seen off at the airport by a number of officials and the Palestinian ambassador in Amman.

Jordan-PLO Accord Urged for Peace Conference

JN2508080191 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 25 Aug 91 pp 1, 16

[Editorial: "Toward Broader Jordanian-Palestinian Coordination"]

[Text] As the date of the proposed Middle East peace conference approaches, there seems to be a greater need to coordinate the positions of Arab countries for a peaceful settlement to the regional crisis, and to unify views and principles that can serve as a common denominator for all the Arab parties that are invited to the conference.

Undoubtedly, Jordan, which is aware of the utmost importance of all of that, has tirelessly called for and did its utmost to realize a joint Arab stance before the conference convenes in October. Toward that objective, Jordanian diplomacy continues to hold intensive contacts and exchange ideas and information with the Palestinian leadership. It also continues to explore the best means to enable the Palestinians to overcome the obstacles to their participation in the proposed conference. This has recently crystallized in the formula of a Jordanian umbrella for the formation of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

The early Jordanian awareness of the importance of coordinating Arab stands and the Jordanian leadership's awareness of the meaning of the Israeli maneuver regarding the Palestinian representation have led Jordan to open its heart and mind to every stance that would imporve the Arab negotiating position and foil Israel's maneuver to decide the results of the conference in advance.

Hence, it is extremely important now to reach a joint Jordanian-Palestinian position based on profound, joint concepts of the nature of this stage as well as both sides' assessment of the current international situation and the need to abide by the principles of peace based on justice and international legitimacy.

While watching with great relief the continuation of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian meetings and the broadening of common concepts on various facts relating to the proposed peace conference, we hope that this will be crowned with a solid and clear Jordanian-Palestinian agreement that defines responsibility, explains duties, coordinates roles, and draws up joint objectives for those Arab parties that are most concerned with the proposed conference and most affected by its results.

Official on Soviet Events, Baker's Visit

JN2508074491 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 25 Aug 91 pp 1, 24

[By Caroline Faraj]

[Text] Foreign Minister Dr. 'Abdallah al-Nusur says that the Soviet Union affirmed to Jordan it will not change the stands and policies adopted by Soviet institutions.

This reaffirmation was contained in a recent letter from the Soviet leaders to the Jordanian Government, which Dr. Al-Nusur received from the Soviet ambassador in Amman.

In a statement to AL-RA'Y, Dr. al-Nusur said that in addition to the many topics of mutual interest disacussed in the letter, it also affirmed the constancy of the Soviet Union's stand on all international issues, particularly the issue of peace and the call for a peace conference to settle the Middle East issue.

On whether the Soviet leadership's decision to remove Aleksandr Bessmertnykh as foreign minister will have an impact on the peace process, Dr. al-Nusur said: As the

Soviet Union and the United States are the sponsors of the peace conference, which is expected to convene in October, it goes without saying that Bessmertnykh was one of its principal engineers.

Dr. al-Nusur added: Mr. Bessmertnykh has his own ideas and policies, but the recent message the Jordanian Government affirming that the Soviet Union will not change its political stands is our basis.

On the other hand, Dr.al-Nusur said that Jordan has not been officially informed, as yet, of U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's visit to the region within the context of his seventh tour of the region for consultations on the peace conference. Western diplomatic sources mentioned that Baker expressed his readiness to pay another visit to the region to prepare for the conference, but without giving a date. Some believe such a visit might take place in the second half of September.

Egyptian Journalists Criticized Over White Paper

JN2608111491 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 26 Aug 91 pp 26, 24

["I Say A Word" column by 'Abd-al-Rahim 'Umar: "My People ... My Brother's Wound"]

[Text] We will not slip into the pit of irresponsible indulgence in a vulgar war of words that some journalists from fraternal Egypt slipped into when responding to the content of the Jordanian white paper on the Kuwait crisis. We are true Arabs who realize that the vast majority of Egypt's sons and intellectuals have stands closer to ours, even if they have been removed from the limelight of the press—this limelight which has been placed, as has the whole of Egypt, at the service of people who the deceased Jamal 'Abd-al-Nasir, Egypt's Arab conscience, knew to be a danger to Egypt and Egypt's Arabism and Islam.

Ever since President Husni Mubarak became president after the incident that took Sadat's life, there have been attempts on his part to restore relations with the Arabs. We, in Jordan, welcomed these initiatives and hastened to participate in the literary festival which was exploited to implement this goal. The same goes for Iraq's poets. Despite the fact that we were guests invited according to Arab traditions to an Arab country, we were shocked by an article written by someone called Ibrahim Sa'dah, if my memory does not fail me, who condemned our visit to Cairo and asked us to leave. In his silly article, he used all the words in the dictionary of defamation against us and the entire Arab nation. On that day, Dr. Nasir al-Din al-Asad, who was chosen to deliver the speech on behalf of the Arab participants in the festival, avoided referring to that strange article and concentrated on Egypt's role in the Arab world and its cultural status. The rest of the participants were satisfied with Dr. al-Asad's stand as a representative for all. They considered the writer of the article one of those lured by the Israeli Embassy to work against their own people. However, time has proved that Egypt's slide down the Camp David slope has its own perspective and defenders, and that the stands of these people are crystallizing more and more alongside the United States and Israel against their homeland and their own people.

Just as Israel opened all its firearms against the intifadah's people and leadership represented by the PLO, these same pens were unleashed against Palestine and the Palestinians, and against their national leadership represented by the PLO. In fact, that campaign expanded to include the Arab nation and the Arab League, which some said should be demolished and the stones of its building thrown into the Nile.

Despite all that, Jordan along with Iraq and some others continued to urge Egypt to return to Arab ranks. Hence, the Arab Cooperation Council [ACC] came into existence. Hence also, regrettably so, was created the complex of Egyptian regionalism. Egypt imagined, mistakenly of course, that its status in the Arab world would continue to be as it was despite all the treason committed in Egypt's name against its Arab world.

Official Egyptian media became a U.S.-Israeli trumpet. Egypt's official stands became a translation of this media. During the Gulf crisis, Egypt unfortunately played a treasonous role and Egyptian officials tried their best to shatter all semblances of hope to reach an Arab solution. Despite Egypt's membership in the ACC, and contrary to the will of the masses of Egyptian students and intellectuals, who expressed their discontent in every way they knew, Egypt sent its army to Hafar al-Batin to deputize for the Israeli army in attacking Iraq. If only Egypt's official conspiracies stopped at this limit! It continues to work against Iraq and against arming it, yet sends secret messengers as though it has finally decided to abandon the other camp and once more return to the Arabs.

The lethal danger is that Egypt is bound to Israel by the unilateral reconciliation treaty, but insists on participating in the proposed peace conference and provides the Palestinians with "advice". It even tried to create a split between them and the Jordanians. Oh grandchildren of al-Sadat, excluding those of 'Abd- al-Nasir! We know you and your objectives. Do not force us to open the disgraceful files.

Shams-al-Din: None of Israelis Still Alive

NC2408052491 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 0445 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Concerning the hostage issue, Shaykh Muhammad Mahdi Shams-al-Din, deputy chairman of the Higher Islamic Shiite Council, announced that he was informed that none of the seven Israeli soldiers held in Lebanon are still alive. He did not identify the source of this information.

Shams-al-Din called on the groups who are holding Israeli soldiers or their remains to hand them back through a deal that would include the release of Western hostages and Arab prisoners.

A Western news agency cited a Shiite source, who refused to be identified, who said that Iran intensified its efforts to conclude a comprehensive deal to end the hostage issue in Lebanon, including the Israeli POW's. He added that Tehran wants to close the hostage file in exchange for the release of Shiite detainees in Israel.

'Source' Says Israel 'Crippling' Hostage Issue

NC2408125991 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 1130 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] A source concerned with the hostages and prisoners issue emphasized to our radio that Israel is in a very tight corner at this stage because the ball is now in its court. For this reason, the source added, Israel is adopting one stand after another and crippling the process by demanding to know if the Israeli captives are alive.

The source indicated that the task of UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar is only to convey the stand of one party to another. The source declared UN Resolution 425 dead, pointing out that Israel will not withdraw from the occupied border strip or even from Jazzin unless it is made to withdraw by force, as from Sidon and Tyre. The source said the political endeavors are no more than tranquilizers used for Israel's benefit.

The source indicated that the U.S. Administration will not pressure Israel on any issue. The source denied that any party has been contacting Israel—as has been reiterated—to secure the release of the prisoners, or that any deal had been made regarding the issue of Shaykh 'Abd-al-Karim 'Ubayd. The source indicated that all matters are raised in the open. The source said that the general Lebanese stand is firm and cannot possibly advance any further.

Shaykh Na'im Qasim on Soviet Changes, Hostages

NC2608095791 (Clandestine) Voice of the Mountain in Arabic to Lebanon 0900 GMT 26 Aug 91

[Text] Shaykh Na'im Qasim, deputy secretary general of Hizballah, has said that, in the aftermath of the coup, the Soviet Union has become worse than before and that Gorbachev is now weak, needs the backing of Russian President Boris Yeltsin, and is making many concessions on communism, the outward appearance of which he is trying to preserve. He noted that many surprises and changes could occur because the Soviet Union is in a very troubled and unstable position.

He added that the Arabs have almost based their calculations on the weakness of the Soviet presence in the international arena, which means no change in favor of the Lebanese situation or change in the political parties' views.

He stressed that Israel will attempt to exploit the developments in the Soviet Union by intensifying Jewish emigration, resorting to blackmail to establish diplomatic relations, getting more guarantees on international developments, and speeding up the peace conference to ensure the Israeli position.

In an exclusive interview with the Voice of Mountain, Shyakh Qasim said Resolution 425 will not be implemented through a Lebanese political action, but needs an Israeli-U.S. decision because the United States is seeking to create conditions in which Israel would be completely assured of its security and of concluding agreements with Lebanon in return for its withdrawal. He noted that the increase in [resistance] operations at this stage is due to technical reasons, not ideology. He demanded that the Lebanese Army support the resistance because liberation can only be achieved through resistance.

The deputy secretary general of Hizballah denied reports about contacts between Hizballah and Israel on resolving the prisoners issue. He noted that the party is not thinking of holding such contacts. He added there could be an initiative to facilitate plans to release Shyakh 'Abd-al-Karim 'Ubayd through UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar's efforts. He stressed he does not have clear and detailed information on the issue.

Shaykh Qasim revealed that Hizballah has two Israeli prisoners, but preferred not to go into details because this would be a free service to Israel which Hizballah does not want to give. He questioned the sources of information disseminated by some groups that there are no Israeli prisoners still alive in Lebanon. He stressed there are eyewitnesses who have testified that Lebanese detainees have been moved to Israel through a deal between the Lebanese Forces and Israel.

He expressed surprise over the cabinet granting amnesty for all as soon as a question about the detainees was raised and as soon as those concerned denied any knowledge. He said the kidnappings took place in the past two months, that is, after the Lebanese Army deployed in Greater Beirut and other areas and after the government took responsibility for security.

Shaykh Na'im Qasim held the state responsible for what happened, stressing the need for the government to pursue a legal and natural course that would lead to the correct results.

'Arrangements' on German Hostages Reported

NC2408163791 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1545 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] According to information received by Radio Free Lebanon, sources close to the hostage issue have been cited as saying that the two German hostages will be treated as an entirely seperate issue from the other Western hostages. Germany is expected to adopt a stand independent to that of the United States on the issue. The sources added that due to Germany's new policy on the hostage issue, the two German hostages are expected to be released soon, probably in the next few days. Appropriate arrangements are being made to end the German hostage issue and to find a solution to the problem of the Hamadi brothers in Germany. The sources, however, did not disclose details of these arrangments.

Fadlallah on Failed Soviet Coup, Regional Issues

NC2408072491 (Clandestine) Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic to Lebanon 0530 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] In his Friday sermon yesterday, Ayatollah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah said that the United States and the rest of the West are using economic aid to pressure the USSR to change its system and give its republics independence.

He added that the Soviet coup attempt, the motive for which was a rejection of humiliation, was not well-planned, but he doubts that the whole thing was merely a sham.

Referring to the Arab reactions to the coup, his eminence said that the Soviet support for the Arabs and the Palestinian issue was merely part of the USSR's cold war with the United States and never crossed certain red lines.

'Allamah Fadlallah remarked that the USSR did not contribute anything to the regional issue in the past and will not do so in the future. He noted, however, that the changes Gorbačhev has brought since he came to power have had positive effects on Islam and the Muslims in the USSR.

Regarding a Middle East political settlement, his eminence asserted that the United States and all the other arrogant powers are seeking to resolve the region's crisis merely to safeguard their interests. He repeated his view that the Arabs are not acting to resolve the region's crisis on the basis that there is a Palestine issue but only an issue of Palestinians, and this is illustrated by their surrender on the question of Palestinian representation.

His eminence called on the Arabs not to attend the peace conference because they will go to the meeting from a position of weakness.

Speaking about kidnapped people in Lebanon, he urged that their fate—whether they are alive or dead—be revealed. He said: We know there were kidnapped persons in the eastern area who were handed over to Israel. We must study this issue carefully and without making partisan statements.

Hizballah To Continue 'Suicide Attacks' on Israel

NC2508144391 Paris AFP in English 1403 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] Tyre, Lebanon, Aug 25 (AFP)—The pro-Iranian Lebanese Shiite movement Hizballah on Sunday vowed to carry on with suicide attacks against Israeli targets in southern Lebanon. "To suggest the invincibility of Israel is the logic of cowards," Shaykh Na'im Qasim, head of Hizballah's paramilitary wing, told a crowd of between 3,000 and 4,000 people. "The (Islamic) nation is not banking on a balance of force. It's the martyrdom of our fighters that will alter the equations, both here in Lebanon and on the international scene."

The gathering, attended by many women in long black robes known as chadors, was held to mark the first anniversary of the death of Haytham Dbuq, the driver of an explosives-laden suicide vehicle that killed three Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon. Shaykh Qasim argued that Lebanese diplomatic efforts to force Israel to comply with United Nations Security Council Resolution 425, which demands an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon, were doomed to failure.

Israeli troops and their proxy militia, the South Lebanon Army, control a "security zone" on Lebanese territory along the border with Israel. "Carry on with your political moves," Shaykh Qasim said, in remarks aimed at the Lebanese state. "We shall also continue with our resistance, like that of Haytham Dbuq."

Hizballah forces had been driven out of much of southern Lebanon by their rivals in the pro-Syrian Shiite movement Amal in 1988. But they returned to the Tyre region last February, taking advantage of the Lebanese Army deployment in the area and the disarming of other militias, and have since then stepped up attacks on Israeli targets in the security zone.

Israelis-SLA Injure, Kill 'Number of Civilians'

NC2408060391 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] The Israeli occupation forces and the agent Lahd [South Lebanese Army, SLA] militia yesterday afternoon shelled the villages of Bra'shit, Shaqra, Safad al-Battikh, Jumayjimah, Tibnin, and Majdal Silm, using 155-mm artillery. A number of civilians were killed or wounded and heavy property damage was caused. The occupation forces yesterday afternoon heavily shelled the villages of Bra'shit, Shaqra, and Safad al-Battikh from their positions on the overlooking hills, killing Ibrahim Musa Khalaf from Safad al-Battikh and wounding a number of civilians. The shelling of Bra'shit continued until 2000 yesterday. This was accompanied by intensive sniper fire, which made it impossible to enter or leave the village.

At 1820 yesterday, the occupation forces shelled Haddathah, Safad al-Battikh, Bra'shit, Shaqra, and Tibnin. The main Safad al-Battikh-Bra'shit road also came under intensive sniper fire.

Some 20 armored vehicles of the Israeli occupation forces were spotted at 1840 yesterday moving in the al-Tayyibah and al-Qantarah areas. The situation in these areas is tense.

A UN Interim Force in Lebanon source has reported that two Irish UN soldiers were wounded in Bra'shit and moved by helicopter to the UN field hospital in al-Naqurah for treatment.

The developments in the south were the focus of the attention of senior officials, who held consultations following which it was decided to give orders to the Lebanese Army to retaliate if attacked. Contacts also were held with U.S. Ambassador Ryan Crocker, who promised to send a report to the U.S. State Department on the situation to pressure Israel to stop the escalation.

Shelling of Southern Villages Resumes 24 Aug

NC2408112291 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1030 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Our correspondent has reported that for the second day running, Bra'shit, Safad al-Battikh, and Tibnin have come under concentrated artillery fire from the positions of the agent Lahd militia in Bayt Yahun and Bra'shit [as heard]. The outcome of the shelling is not yet known. The Irish UN forces, however, have been placed on a state of alert, and roads leading to these villages have been closed to protect the people.

Bra'shit this morning came under 12.7-mm machine-gun fire for 30 minutes. No casualties were reported. Three agent Lahd militia armored vehicles were seen this morning advancing from Dayr Siryan toward the area of Wadi al-Hujayr. Jarju'-al-Luwayzah road this morning also came under bursts of sniper fire from the occupation forces' positions on Tallat Sujud. A heavy exodus of people from the area as been reported as a result of the continued shelling.

Anti-Hizballah Demonstration Reported in South

NC2408164591 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1530 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] REUTER cited military sources in south Lebanon as saying that a Hizballah member was killed yesterday when hundreds of inhabitants of (Fa'lay) and al-Luwayzah marched on the Hizballah offices in Jarju'.

The sources said that the demonstrators demanded that Hizballah members leave the region because they feel that Israelis shell their towns due to the Hizballah presence in the area. The sources also said that the Hizballah members fired shots in the air to disperse the demonstration and that the demonstrators retaliated by firing shots as well, killing a Hizballah member in a clash that lasted 15 minutes. Lebanese soldiers had to interve to stop the fighting.

A Hizballah statement issued after the incident did not mention the protest, saying only that village inhabitants were in a state of panic when a man fired on them, killing one. The statement added that the Army arrested the killer.

Army Extends Deployment in North; Syrians Leave

NC2508054091 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0430 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] In implementation of the cabinet decision to extend state authority over all Lebanese territory, the Lebanese Army yesterday extended its area of deployment in the north. Army units deployed in Bsharri and at Tripoli port. The Army also carried out raids in al-Batrun and Kasrawan areas to search for caches of heavy- and medium-caliber weapons. The Syrian Arab forces have evacuated their positions in Bsharri and al-Kurah in favor of the Army.

Lahd Demands Lebanese Army Withdrawal From Iqlim

NC2408171891 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1545 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Our correspondent in the south reports that the situation there, especially in Iqlim al-Tuffah, is very tense. Security sources indicate that Major General Antoine Lahd, commander of the South Lebanese Army, demanded that the Lebanese Army withdraw from the villages in Iqlim al-Tuffah. If the Army fails to heed his warning, Lahd said that he will subject the area to heavy artillery shelling. Lahd said that fundamentalist gunmen stage military operations from the area.

Sources also report that Hizballah issued a strong warning to security personnel that its gunmen will not be sympathetic toward Lebanese Army units deployed in Iqlim al-Tuffah if they confront Hizballah elements as they did yesterday. The warning said that the resistance is a red line that cannot be crossed.

Our correspondent reported that parts of the 2d Intervention Regiment assembled at Sidon's northern entrance and that tanks were transferred from the south and deployed in the town of al-Jiyah, causing a severe traffic jams.

Sources close to Hizballah have told our correspondent that the situation in Iqlim al-Tuffah is very fluid. The Lebanese Army is apparently the target of two threats: Hizballah's and the South Lebanese Army.

The tension in Iqlim al-Tuffah has been evident since yesterday following clashes involving tank and mortar fire. During the clashes, towns in Iqlim al-Tuffah and Bint Jubayl district were shelled leaving one person dead and a number of others wounded, including two Irish soldiers.

Gorbachev Advisor Comments on Peace Conference

JN2608121391 Damascus TISHRIN in Arabic 19 Aug 91 pp 1, 11

[Text] Mr. Karen Brutents, Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's advisor and personal envoy, praised Syrian-Soviet relations and the big and important role President Hafiz al-Asad plays in pushing the peace process forward.

This came in an exclusive interview he gave to TISHRIN. He added: My visit to Syria comes within the framework of Soviet-Syrian relations. I carried a message to President al-Asad from President Gorbachev. I was very satisfied with my meeting and talks with President al-Asad, which once again affirmed the strength of the relations that bind our two countries. We truly wish to convene the peace conference in a constructive manner. We also want it to lead to a just and comprehensive peace and stability in the Middle East. The issues under discussion are not easy. President al-Asad has very valuable opinions, which are always received with great interest. The meeting took place in a warm atmosphere of friendship and cordial relations which will bolster cooperation between the two countries, especially since it followed an incident that could be termed historic, which is preparing to convene a peace conference in the Middle East.

Mr. Brutents adds: The Soviet Union's stand on the Middle East crisis is firm and has not changed. The Soviet Union has always, and will continue to support a just and comprehensive peace. We are seeking to convene an international conference and find a solution based on 242 and 338, and on the principle of land for peace. We also want the United Nations to play an effective role in the peace process. These are some of the principles that represent our stand on the Middle East crisis. What is important here is to affirm that the conference is not an objective on its own. Its results, however, are important, and the establishment of a just and firm peace is also important.

On restoring relations with Israel, Mr. Brutents denied the claims about a specific date for restoring diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Israel. He affirmed that the Soviet stand has not changed. It is the same declared official stand. Restoring diplomatic relations cannot take place except within the course of starting the peace process whose objective is to settle the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Minister on Peace, Palestinian Participation

JN2508081991 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0415 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] Information Minister Muhammad Salman says that the current phase, which is seeing preparations for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, has shown the solidarity of Syrian-Egyptian ties and the two countries' keenness to support the peace march on the basis of the Arab principles that will not be abandoned and the commitment to achieve a comprehensive and just peace in the region in accordance with the resolutions of international legitimacy.

In a statement published today by to the Cairo paper AL-MASA', the minister affirmed that ties between the two countries are being tangibly enhanced, thanks to the instructions of Presidents Hafiz al-Asad and Husni Mubarak. Salman added: The whole world now testifies to the positive Arab position on peace efforts. This outcome has been achieved, thanks to the positive Syrian response to President Bush's proposals for holding a Middle East peace conference.

On the proposed Palestinian representation, the minister asserted that the Palestine question is an Arab issue. He added: Syria and Egypt affirmed their commitment to the pan-Arab nature of the Palestine question. There will be no just and comprehensive peace unless the Palestinians participate in the peace conference.

Salman stressed that the role of Syria and Egypt at this phase centers mainly on adherence to the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and securing the liberation of the occupied Arab territories in Palestine, the Golan, and southern Lebanon in implementation of the international legitimacy and Arab summit resolutions.

Israeli Statements on Peace Conference Viewed

JN2508084391 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0330 GMT 25 Aug 91

[From the press review]

[Text] In its editorial, the newspaper TISHRIN reviews the obstacles placed in the way of peace saying: The Israeli Government has begun to speak publicly of the need to postpone the peace conference due to be held in October. Yitzhaq Shamir claimed yesterday that the Arabs are not ready for negotiations. Shamir set a new condition when he asked the USSR to resume its ties with Israel before the latter could attend the international Middle East peace conference. As for Housing Minister Ari'el Sharon, he asked the Arabs to halt the arms race and start a democratization process, and viewed this as a precondition for Israel's participation in the peace conference.

TISHRIN affirms that all these Israeli conditions are part of a cheap maneuver, since the Shamir government is not interested in peace. Besides, this government is doing its utmost to sabotage the idea of the conference called for by the United States and the USSR on the basis of trading land for peace, the paper adds. Syria, Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians have shown a willingness to attend the conference. Israel is the only party that set impossible conditions, the paper notes.

TISHRIN goes on to say: Israel has rejected true Palestinian representation and insists on excluding the residents of Arab Jerusalem and choosing members of the Palestinian delegation to take part in negotiations. It has repeatedly made public its determination not to withdraw from the occupied territories, especially Jerusalem and the Golan. Furthermore, it is building settlements in the occupied territories on a daily basis and settling Jewish immigrants there. Moreover, it is blackmailing the USSR and the United States to obtain financial, economic, and political gains in return for nothing, and without even showing a readiness to commit itself to meeting the requirements of peace.

Concluding its editorial, TISHRIN says: Israel's conditions, be they new or old, are part of an exposed maneuver meant to frustrate international efforts, torpedo U.S. proposals, and allow turmoil and the law of the jungle to prevail in the region. Given this situation, it is natural for us to expect the world to confront and thwart this maneuver to impose its legitimacy and prestige, since there will be no international legitimacy nor credibility left if the Zionist aggression on the Arab people is maintained and the Security Council resolutions remain ink on paper.

Al-Asad Receives Moroccan King's Envoy, Message

JN2308085391 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0815 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Abdelhadi Boutaleb, personal envoy of His Majesty King Hassan II of Morocco, at 0930 today. Boutaleb conveyed a message and greetings to the president from His Majesty King Hassan II. The president asked him to convey a reply message and his greetings to his majesty.

Discussions revolved around the situation in the region, the Arab situation, and the peace process in the Middle East.

Bahraini Minister Brings Message for al-Asad

JN2608155791 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 26 Aug 91

[Text] President Hafiz al-Asad received Bahraini Housing Minister Shaykh Khalid Bin-'Abdallah Al Khalifah at 1700 today. The meeting was attended by Housing Minister Muhammad Nur 'Antabi.

Upon his arrival in Damascus this morning, Shaykh Khalid Al Khalifah said in a statement: I have the honor to have with me a written message for President Hafiz al-Asad from his brother His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the amir of Bahrain.

He added: I am happy to be in my second country, Syria, and relations between the two fraternal countries are very strong and we always seek to improve and strengthen them.

Afghanistan

Najibollah Sends Congratulations to Yeltsin

LD2308190791 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] Esteemed Najibollah, president of Afghanistan, sent a message of congratulations yesterday to Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, president of the Russian Federation. The text is as follows:

Esteemed Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin, president of the Russian Federation. Allow me to congratulate you on the failure of the state coup d'etat. The victory of democracy as an important event in the history of Russia, which is the outcome of resistance by Moscow citizens and your own role in mobilizing the people, showed the world that the people of Soviet Russia defend democracy.

The Republic of Afghanistan is at the present time in favor of the consolidation and strengthening of friendship and mutual cooperation in its new dimensions in continuation of more than 70 years of traditional friendship with Soviet Russia, which has passed its evolutionary stages.

Esteemed President, you are aware that the Republic of Afghanistan, based on the will of our people, followed the national reconciliation policy during the last five years to end the war and ensure peace, in the interest of the country. The process of the peaceful and political solution of the issue of Afghanistan is aimed at the further implementation of democracy and, finally, the holding of elections. As a result of this policy, the process has reached a delicate stage. Therefore, the people of Afghanistan sincerely hope to enjoy the support of Soviet friends and yourself in order to remedy the suffering resulting from the 13 years of war.

Once again I wish success to the people of Soviet Russia and yourself in the further implementation of the aspirations for democracy.

[Signed] Najibollah, president of Afghanistan.

National Assembly Sends Message

LD2408230691 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 24 Aug 91

["Text" of congratulatory message from the Afghan National Assembly to the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic Supreme Soviet in Kabul; date of issue not given—read by announcer]

[Text] His Excellency Esteemed Ruslan Imranovich Khasbulatov, acting chairman of RSFSR Supreme Soviet:

Afghan National Assembly members sincerely congratulate your excellency and other RSFSR Supreme Soviet members on the failed state coup d'etat in Soviet Russia as an important victory for democracy and parliamentarism. The parliament of the Republic of Afghanistan, which resumed its activities in 1987 after 15 years delay with the approval of a new Constitution in the country, is one of the main outcomes of the political policy of the Republic of Afghanistan, based on the principles of national reconciliation and realization of the democratic process and ending of the devastating long-running war in this country.

The meeting of the parliamentary delegation of the Republic of Afghanistan, led by the Senate chairman, with your excellency last September is considered a good and valuable memory of cooperation and understanding among the representatives of Afghanistan and the Soviet Russian Federation. The old friendship between the USSR and Afghanistan and the consolidation of parliamentary ties between them is the manifestation of the fact that the parliaments of both friendly countries took further steps to strengthen the foundations of democracy and parliamentary establishments by carrying out joint traditional efforts more than ever in this stage of the victory of principles of democracy in Soviet Russia and in this sensitive stage in the peaceful solution of the issue of Afghanistan.

The National Assembly of the Republic of Afghanistan hopes that you convey the voices of the people of Afghanistan, who suffered considerably from the pains of the 13-year war, to each one of the members of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet to cooperate toward ending war, solving the Afghan problem peacefully and politically, and assisting the people of Afghanistan in this stage of history of our country.

I invite the RSFSR Supreme Soviet leadership to pay a friendly visit to Afghanistan and to become familiar with the realities of our country.

The National Assembly of the Republic of Afghanistan wishes increasing success for the RSFSR parliament and yourself toward fulfilling the lofty aspirations of democracy and expansion and deepening of parliamentary ties, as a strong foundation for the increasing popular and state cooperation between both countries.

[Signed] The National Assembly of the Republic of Afghanistan

USSR Changes Possibly Undermine Kabul Regime

BK2608073191 Hong Kong AFP in English 0331 GMT 26 Aug 91

[By Rene Slama]

[Text] Peshawar, Pakistan, Aug 26 (AFP)—The collapse of communism in the Kremlin could speed up the winds of change in Afghanistan where the government has been dependent on KGB and Soviet military support in recent years, locals and foreigners here say.

Diplomats, moreover, reckon that upheaval will shake the Islamic republics of Soviet Central Asia in the framework of an eventual disintegration of the Marxist monolith.

They have begun predicting serious difficulties for Afghan President Najibollah and his communist-oriented government if Soviet air and road supply links are cut before or during the harsh winter, which starts in December.

Two and a half years after completion of the Soviet military withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Kabul government remains largely on multi-form aid from the Soviet Union under bilateral accords, particularly weapons, fuel, spare parts and foodstuffs.

The United States last year put the value of this aid at about 300 million dollars a month and reckoned there were more than 500 Soviet military advisers in Kabul.

Several leaders of the resistance alliance, or mojahedin, have welcomed the failure of last week's coup bid in Moscow and in particular saluted the strengthened position of Russian President Boris Yeltsin, whom they say never hid his desire for total disengagement from Afghanistan's internal affairs.

"The thing to watch for now around Kabul is the number of planes and trucks coming from the Soviet Union," said a European analyst in reference to the uninterrupted flow of Soviet aid to the Afghan capital since Moscow began its nine-month troop withdrawal from Afghanistan in May 1988.

Kabul newspapers on Sunday reported a series of urgent top level meetings on the question of supplying the capital.

Iran and Pakistan, who will be most affected by the future of Afghanistan, have recently stepped up efforts aimed at ending the conflict within the framework of a United Nations plan calling for a transitional government in Kabul ahead of elections.

Tehran will from Monday host a fresh conference on Afghanistan similar to a gathering July in Islamabad of officials of Shiite and Sunni guerrilla factions along with Iranian Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and Pakistan's top diplomat, Akram Zaki.

The conference comes at "an opportune moment," an official Pakistani spokesman said, adding that he hoped events in Moscow would give impetus to moves aimed at ending a war that has left more than one million people dead and prompted five million Afghans to leave their homeland since 1978.

"The problem today is that the Afghan opposition has no real leadership and is not credible," said Naim Majrooh, head of the Peshawar-based Afghan Information Centre. Majrooh said that in Afghanistan and the Soviet Islamic republics, "all will depend on the capacity of the people to create a leadership and overcome economic problems."

The Afghan intellectual also warned against a "total disintegration" in both areas and the possible emergence of Islamic fundamentalism while stressing the aspiration for influence of major Muslim nations such as Iran and Turkey.

Defense Minister Signs USSR Economic Protocol

LD2408225191 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] A protocol on consolidating friendly relations and economic links between the Republic of Afghanistan and the USSR was signed today by Defense Minister General Muhammad Aslam Watanjar and Yuriy Alekseyevich (Korganov), deputy head of Engineering Department of the USSR Foreign Ministry, at the headquarters of the Defense Ministry of the Republic of Afghanistan. The BAKHTAR Information Agency military section reports that some member of the leadership of the Defense Ministry and members of the guest delegation were also present at the signing ceremony.

'Acting President' Mojaddadi Congratulates Yeltsin

LD2608083391 Tehran IRNA in English 1223 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] Islamabad, Aug. 25, IRNA—Professor Sibghatullah Mojaddadi, president of the Afghan interim government has congratulated Boris Yeltsin, president of the Russian Federation on his "sincere and courageous stand in defence of democracy and self- determination of the people of the Soviet Union."

In a letter written to the Russian president, the text of which was recived by IRNA today, Mojaddadi while lauding Yeltsin for his "steadfastness in upholding democratic principles" said he had become a source of encouragement and inspiration to his countrymen to further freedom in the Soviet Union.

He also expressed the optimism that following the failure of "undemocratic elements," the Russian leader would work harder for the restoration of peace and the right of self-determination to the people of Afghanistan and would stop interfering in the internal affairs of that country.

Bangladesh

Civil Servants Continue Strike Despite Warnings

Warnings of 'Stern Action'

BK2308164491 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] The government has warned that stern action will be taken under the existing rules against those government servants found violating office discipline and working environment. The warning came in a government press note issued in Dhaka this evening. The press note said the government held a series of discussions earlier with the representatives of government servants on their three main demands.

Firstly, keeping in view the various problems being faced by the government employees, especially the low-paid government servants, and considering the overall situation with sympathy and the financial ability of the government, a new pay scale has been announced for all government officials and employees. In this new national pay scale, basic pay and other allowances have been increased by 80 percent at the lowest level.

Secondly, the office timing has also been rescheduled as per demands of the employees. Under the new schedule, office hour has been fixed from 0800 to 1430 in the capital city of Dhaka. The timing in division, district, and upazila [subdistrict] levels has been fixed from 1000 to 1700 from Saturdays to Wednesdays. On Thursdays, it has been reduced to 1400.

Thirdly, a decision has been taken to constitute a high-powered committee to recommend promotions of all the government employees after considering their cases.

The government feels, the press note adds, by introducing new pay scale, rescheduling office hours and forming committee for promotion, all the demands of the employees have been reasonably met. The government hoped that this pragmatic and sympathetic decision would inspire government servants to perform their individual duties with sincerity. They would maintain discipline in all spheres to uphold the greater interests of the people by taking part in development activities of the government. The press note said despite these measures a number of employees are not only refraining from their duties, but also creating obstacles in the way of others doing their duties and forcing them to take part in meetings and processions.

The press note said such a condition is not desirable in the interests of flourishing establish [as heard] democratic process. Considering the necessity of ensuring working environment and maintaining discipline in office and continuing public services, the government decides to remind the concerned government employees that any attempt to disturb the working environment is a punishable offense. The Government Servants Special Regulations Ordinance of 1979, Government Servants Discipline Regular Attendance Ordinance of 1982 and Government Servants Discipline and Appeal Regulations of 1985 provide for punishment for these offenses. Persons found indulging in violating these ordinances and regulations are liable to be dismissed and termination from the service, demotion, reduction in salary and its deduction and other punishments. [sentence as heard]

The press note said the government of the republic is run by the collective efforts of all officials and employees. It is the duty of all to maintain working environment in the offices, the press note adds. But if this environment is violated by anybody, the government will be compelled to take actions against those persons despite his unwillingness under these ordinances and regulations. The government hopes, the press note said, officials and employees of all levels will perform their duties from tomorrow and will extend all-out cooperation in maintaining office discipline and working environment.

Notice of Possible Dismissal

BK2508160091 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1530 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] The government has asked the concerned government employees not attending their duties and obstructing others from doing their duties to join work within next three days. If they fail to return to their duties, the government will be compelled to appoint new people in their places against its wishes. The call was given in a press note issued by the Establishment Ministry in Dhaka today. It said while making fresh recruitments, assistance of concerned employment exchange will be taken.

The press note said concerned government employees are once again advised not to compel the government to take such action against its wish. The press note said the government has already appealed to maintain the working environment in the office by attending the duties regularly through discussions with the representatives of the striking employees and press notes. A handful of employees are instigating the employees willing to work to abstain from their duties. Such activities are not desirable in running the administration smoothly and those found guilty are liable to be dismissed from their jobs under Clause 3 of the Government Service Special Provision Ordinance 1979.

India

Soviet Envoy Meets Rao, Reports on Situation

BK2308145491 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] India has offered to work closely with the Soviet president, Mr. Mikhail Gorbachev, in his endeavors for disarmament and world peace. The prime minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, told the Soviet ambassador, Mr. Viktor Isakov, in New Delhi today that his government hopes that Mr. Gorbachev will have the opportunity to complete the tasks he has undertaken. Mr. Rao said India is committed to making the relationship with the Soviet Union closer and deeper.

During his meeting lasting over 30 minutes, the Soviet ambassador gave a detailed briefing to Mr. Narasimha Rao of the current situation in his country. He informed that President Gorbachev was fully in command of the situation.

Parties Criticize Yeltsin for Attack on CPSU

BK2408130891 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] The CPI and the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxists] have criticized the attack by the Russian Federation president, Mr. Boris Yeltsin, on the Soviet Commmunist Party. The CPI termed the ban on the Communist Party and closure of PRAVDA as anti-democratic, while the CPI-M described Mr. Yeltsin's action as witch-hunt against the Communists to undermine the socialist system.

Calm, Cautious Approach Urged for USSR

BK2308134591 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Commentary by Brahm Dutt: "The U-turn in Soviet Union"]

[Text] The return of Gorbachev to power in less than three days is no less a surprise than his removal in an unsuccessful coup. The developments in the Soviet Union are really breathtaking. Even those who had hoped that forces pledged to economic reforms, democracy, and a more viable federal arrangement would reassert themselves did not anticipate the collapse of the coup within less than 48 hours, and that too, without bloodshed. The U-turn of events in the Soviet Union is unprecedented from all accounts.

What led to coup is not as important now as what gave it a U-turn. Thanks to the internal pressure of democratic forces, leadership of Mr. Boris Yeltsin, revolt in the armed forces, strike by miners, world pressure, and above all, supporters of President Gorbachev who came out in the streets in millions defying emergency regulations. The declaration of freedom by the Baltic republics of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania also had its moral pressure. The dooming developments in the Soviet Union over the past 84 hours have apparently ended on a happy note and the father of perestroyka and glasnost is back in power. Democracy and reforms have prevailed. It is clear that the ludicrously short-lived hardline regime bitterly failed to gauge the extent and intensity of the democratic sentiments in the country.

Mr. Yanayev could not imagine, much less believe, that Boris Yeltsin—an arch rival and critic of President Mikhail Gorbachev— would stand by Gorbachev, call the armed forces to revolt, give a call for a general strike, issue a series of decrees proclaiming control over their security forces on Russian territory, and would effectively bestow upon himself the right to leaders of takeover. [sentence as heard] According to the latest reports, except the interior minister, Boris Pugo, who committed suicide, almost all others have been arrested and would be tried for the coup.

The role of international community is no small. [as heard] World Bank threatened to withhold $30 million committed for technical assistance, USA vowed to cut off aid, Britain suspended technical aid program and Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd asked European Community to freeze EC technical assistance program, European Parliament president threatened to make major changes in the EC policy of cooperation with Soviet Union. NATO asked Soviet leaders to keep to international agreements. NATO member states were scheduled to meet in Brussels to consider a common approach to events in Soviet Union. Added to the international pressure, Soviet hard-liners were finding it difficult to control the three secessionist Baltic republics as there was revolt in the armed forces.

The abrupt end of the coup should not obscure the factors which accounted for it in the first place. The democratic forces in the Soviet Union cannot forget that the exercise of freedom must go hand-in-hand with the heightened sense of responsibility. This calls for cooperation between Gorbachev and Yeltsin who has emerged taller than his size from this ordeal. He will get the Hero of Soviet Union award. The West too must learn that, in its eagerness to spread democracy and market economy, it cannot quicken the pace of reforms in a country not known to these things for over 7 decades. The system must be able to cope up with the change. Now they will have to come with much greater financial and technical aid package to help Gorbachev. Alternative to change with caution is chaos, anarchy and finally loss of precious freedom itself. Mr. Gorbachev's accomplishments over the last few years, including the fundamental reforms of the Soviet society, ending the cold war, pushing the world toward peace and arms limitation, reshaping the international relations in Europe and Asia have made Gorbachev dearer than even the loved ones in every country. His deeds have become axiomatic in understanding the contemporary world.

One of the greatest statesmen of the 20th century, Mr. Gorbachev has made a decisive break from the intellectual illusions and fantasies that have choked the world for more than 100 years. He has brought the world closer than ever before toward a civil society in international relations. In the failure of the coup, now lies a brighter future for the people of the Soviet Union whom India has always wished well.

Official Confirms Offer of Nuclear Reactors Sale

BK2608090491 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 26 Aug 91

[Text] India has offered to build nuclear research reactors in foreign countries for training of technocrats in nuclear energy programs. Several countries, including Egypt and Syria, have shown a keen interest in the offer. Disclosing this to newsmen in New Delhi today, the chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, Dr. P.K. Iyenger, said India has the capabilities for designing, construction, commissioning and operation of five-megawatt research nuclear reactors.

PRC President's Comment on Bilateral Ties Noted

BK2408075091 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] The Chinese president, Mr. Yang Shangkun, has called for further growth in Sino-Indian political and economic ties, saying that it will be conducive to peace in Asia and the world. Accepting the credentials of the new Indian ambassador, Mr. Salman Haider, in Beijing today, Mr. Yang recalled the long-standing friendly relations between the two countries and spoke about his meeting with the Indian medical mission led Dr. Dwarkanath Kotnis in the early thirties. President Yang thanked India for its assistance to those affected by floods in various parts of China recently.

In his reply, Mr. Haider said New Delhi is looking forward to the visit of the Chinese prime minister, Mr. Li Peng, before the end of this year.

Foreign Minister Reports on Talks With Pakistan

BK2308161491 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] New Delhi sincerely hopes that Pakistan will translate into concrete action its desire for normalizing relations with India. The external affairs minister, Mr. Madhavsinh Solanki, told the Lok Sabha this evening that the situation on the ground will provide the real test. Making a statement, he said instead of frequent references to war to meet their extraneous purposes, Pakistani leaders should address themselves to the root cause of the present tension between the two countries. He said this was conveyed to the special envoy of the Pakistan prime minister, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, who visited New Delhi earlier this week.

Mr. Solanki said clarification was sought from the envoy on the reported interview of the Pakistan prime minister to the NEWSWEEK, stating that the Kashmir issue has the potential to be the cause of yet another war. He said the envoy clarified that the interview did not fully convey what Mr. Nawaz Sharif had really intended, particularly his desire for a peaceful resolution of all differences between India and Pakistan. The minister said for a meaningful and sustained improvement in Indo-Pak relations, Pakistan's support to terrorism and subversion in Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir, and its concerted campaign to internationalize the Kashmir issue must stop.

Minister Speaks of 'Grave Threat' to Gandhi Family

BK2608092091 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 26 Aug 91

[Text] A bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha today seeking to provide special protection guard security cover to family members of assassinated, serving, and former prime ministers. The home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, introducing the bill said reports indicate that there is a grave threat to the family members of the former prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, from several extremist organizations which necessitate special security cover to the family. The Janata Dal and CPI [Communist Party of India] members objected to the introduction of the bill on the ground that it seeks to create special class of people and is violative of the constitutional provisions of equality before law. CPI members demanded that the scope of the bill be enlarged to include others also who face threats. The leader of the opposition, Mr. L.K. Advani, agreed with the ruling party that the house has the legislative competence to discuss the bill. He said the present formulation of the bill which seeks to distinguish between a former prime minister and an assassinated prime minister be removed. The speaker, Mr. Shivraj Patil observed that it is the duty of the government to provide protection to the members of the family of the former prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi, and allowed the introduction.

Another Suspect Arrested in Gandhi Murder Case

BK2408161291 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Another LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] militant believed to be a close associate of Sivarasan, the prime suspect in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, was arrested by the police in Trichy District late last night. Two other LTTE men reportedly managed to escape.

Further on Arrest

BK2508040591 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] An LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] militant believed to be a close associate of the prime suspect in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case, Sivarasan, who committed suicide recently, was arrested by the police in a forest area in (Pianchi) District on Friday night. Two others managed to escape. A hunt is on to nab them.

Commission To Investigate Gandhi Assassination

BK2608130291 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 26 Aug 91

[Text] The government has appointed a commission of inquiry consisting of the former chief justice of Delhi high court, Mr. Justice M.C. Jain, to probe the assassination of the former prime minister, Rajiv Gandhi. This will be in addition to the commission headed by Mr. Justice J.S. Verma. An official press release issued in New Delhi says the commission will look into the consequences of events and circumstances relating to the assassination other than those covered by the terms of reference for the Verma Commission. The commission will submit its report within six months and its headquarters will be in New Delhi.

Janata Dal Party Chief V.P. Singh Resigns

BK2408161491 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Mr. V.P. Singh has resigned as leader of the Janata Dal Parliamentary Party. Agencies quoting a statement by Mr. Singh in New Delhi say that he resigned on the ground that his income and wealth are above the ceiling proposed to be fixed by the party for the leaders. He said the parliamentary party should elect someone from the scheduled castes and tribes, backward, or minority communities who fulfill the economic criteria.

The resignation comes in the wake of a letter by the party leader, Mr. Ajit Singh, to him suggesting that all those members, who did not come within the ceiling, should relinquish their posts.

Forces Said Ready To Repulse 'Any Misadventure'

BK2508125491 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] India has striven for peace with its neighbors and will always do so. Addressing army jawans [soldiers] in a forward area near the line of actual control [in Jammu and Kashmir], President Venkataraman said New Delhi has never thought of annexing an inch of other's territory. He declared that our armed forces are ever ready to repulse any misadventure from across the border. Mr. Venkataraman said it requires commitment and high motivation to perform the duties effectively in areas having adverse climatic and difficult terrain conditions. The president dwelt at length about the problems of resettlement of ex-servicemen and said financial assistance, credit, and training facilities are available to the ex-servicemen for self-employment schemes.

Rao: Country Not To Disintegrate Over Religion

BK2408151891 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] The prime minister today reiterated his government's commitment to protect the interests of all the religions in the country. Delivering the Rajiv Gandhi memorial lecture in New Delhi today, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao declared that there is no danger to any religion in the country and asked the people to dissociate themselves with certain forces who want to create confusion in the name of religion. He said the government introduced a bill in the Lok Sabha yesterday to maintain the status quo of religious places and expressed the hope that the bill will be passed by parliament.

Expressing his determination that the country will not be allowed to disintegrate in the name of religion, Mr. Narasimha Rao asked the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] to cooperate with the government in solving other serious issues facing the country.

Bill To Protect Places of Worship Debated

BK2308132291 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and the National Front-left party members clashed in the Lok Sabha today and the house witnessed a near scuffle over certain remarks by Syed Shahabuddin, Janata Dal. The house was discussing a private member's resolution on the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid [disputed shrine] issue. A BJP member said no namaz [Muslim ritual prayer] is being offered at the disputed site in Ayodhya, but the Janata Dal member promptly retorted back, but his remark was not audible in the din of the house. Several BJP members rushed to Janata Dal benches and sensing trouble, the panel chairman, Mr. Ram Singh, adjourned the house for 20 minutes amid unprecedented uproarious scenes. Even during the break, members from both sides continued heated exchanges in the house and senior BJP, Congress-I, and other party members tried to pacify tempers. When the house reassembled, the leader of the opposition, Mr. L.K. Advani, requested the chair to expunge from records if any objectionable remarks have been made by the member. Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, Janata Dal, said members should avoid provoking others, though political differences are bound to exist. The speaker, Mr. Shivraj Patil, asked the members to maintain the dignity of the house and said objectionable remarks, if any, would be removed from the records.

Later, intervening in the debate, the minister of state for home, Mr. M.M. Jacob, assured the house that every effort will be made for a peaceful settlement of the Ayodhya issue. He said dialogue will be continued whenever the Uttar Pradesh government so desires. At this assurance and in view of the government introducing a bill in the house today on protection of places of worship, the mover, Mr. Zainul Abedin, CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist]; withdrew his resolution.

The government today introduced in the Lok Sabha a bill seeking to prohibit the conversion of any place of worship and to maintain the status quo of all religious places, except the disputed Ayodhya site, as they existed on the 15th of August 1947. The introduction of the bill was marked by a walkout by the BJP members as their procedural objections were overruled by the speaker after hearing members from both sides. Speaking amid cheers from the Congress-I members, the home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, said the new legislation is proposed to be brought into force from the 11th of July this year as it was on that day the president in his address to the parliament announced the government's intention.

Further on Bill

BK2308163491 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] A bill seeking to ban conversion of places of worship and to maintain their status quo as it existed on 15 August 1947 was introduced in the Lok Sabha today.

The bill exempts the disputed Ayodhya site. The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] members staged a walkout when the speaker overruled certain procedural objections raised by them on the introduction of the bill.

Speaking amid cheers from the Congress-I benches, the home minister, Mr. S.B. Chavan, said the bill fulfills a poll promise of the ruling party. He said the legislation is proposed to be brought into force from the 11th of July this year as it was on that day the president declared the government's intentions in parliament in this regard.

The statement of objects and reasons of the bill says the proposed ban on conversion or any alteration of any place of worship is aimed at avoiding controversies from time to time. The Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid [disputed shrine in Ayodhya] dispute has been exempted from its purview as the case forms a class by itself. The bill also seeks to exempt all disputes settled before the commencement of the new legislation. However, disputes pending on the 11th of July last will be deemed to have been closed and further suits or proceedings barred.

Earlier, the BJP members raised several objections and held up the introduction of the bill for nearly an hour. They maintained that the house does not have the legislative competence to bring in the legislation. They also argued that the purpose of the bill is defeated as it seeks to exclude Jammu and Kashmir from its purview. The speaker, Mr. Shivraj Patil, overruled their objections after hearing the members from both sides.

The Congress-I spokesman, Professor C.P. Thakur, has appealed to the secular parties to ensure that the places of worship special provisions bill is passed smoothly. Talking to newsmen in New Delhi, he said use of religion for political ends has been one of the most unfortunate developments in the country.

The BJP leader, Mr. L.K. Advani, has termed the bill as ill-conceived and uncalled for. He told newsmen that it would be wrong to presume that the legislation will preempt controversies.

Reaction to Bill Noted

BK2508150491 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] The Janata Dal leader, Mr. V.P. Singh, has described the introduction of a bill ensuring status quo of places of religious worship as on the 15th of August 1947 as a triumph of the National Front-left front combine. In a statement in New Delhi today, Mr. Singh said it will end conflicts arising out of disputes over religious places. He said it will deprive some political parties from exploiting sacred places for political ends.

The Uttar Pradesh executive of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] has expressed concern over the introduction of the bill relating to the places of worship in the Lok Sabha. The two-day convention of the state executive of the party ended in Etawah last evening. Briefing newsmen in Lucknow today, the president of the state unit, Mr. Kalraj Mishra, alleged that the bill will give rise to new controversies. The Shankaracharya [Hindu priest] of Kanchi Kamakothi Peetham, Shri Jayendra Saraswati, has appealed to the government to withdraw the Places of Worship Special Provisions Bill 1991.

Commentary Lauds Bill

BK2508092891 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Commentary by Tharian of The HINDUSTAN TIMES]

[Text] The Places of Worship Special Provisions Bill 1991, which was introduced in the Lok Sabha on Friday, is major a step toward defusing communal tensions and strengthening secularism. The bill is the fulfillment of a major commitment by the government. It seeks to prohibit conversion of any place of worship and to maintain the status quo of religious places as they existed on the 15th of August 1947 except in the case of the Ayodhya shrine and certain other matters. While the root of the trouble is the Ayodhya dispute which had led to tension, violence and bloodshed, it was indeed sad that the sentiments of the people were whipped up in the name of religion. A place of worship was turned into an electoral issue. God was forgotten, man was forgotten, religion was exploited for electoral gains.

History should not be allowed to repeat itself. Imagine what will happen to the country if several contentious Ayodhyas emerged all over the country. If every temple, mosque, gurdwara [sikh temple], and church becomes the subject of dispute and communal fights, there will be no peace, no amity, in fact no religion. It is in order to avert such a catastrophe that the bill on places of worship has been introduced in parliament. It is quite heartening that the bill is getting wide support in the house. The grounds on which the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and the Shiv Sena opposed the bill are flimsy. To characterize the bill as a (?money) bill is to distort the constitution. Similarly to argue that a place of worship is a place of pilgrimage and, therefore, the subject comes under the jurisdiction of the states only is to mix up worship and pilgrimage.

The only valid criticism raised by the BJP is that the bill should not have been introduced in haste. The members should have been given adequate time to study the bill. The need to enact the proposed legislation is unquestionable. First of all the nation should not fritter away its energy on irrelevant questions like whether a mosque was once upon a time a temple or a temple a mosque. There will be no end to disputes and quarrels if the history of each and every place of worship is to be looked into. A line of demarcation should be drawn so that no place of worship may become a subject of dispute. August the 15th 1947 is the line drawn up by the bill.

A solution to the Ayodhya dispute, however, is not on the cards, now that the BJP is in power in Uttar Pradesh. It has a special responsibility to ensure that no untoward incident takes place over the dispute. The state government will be deepening the crisis if it decides to take over the disputed site by an ordinance. Nor will it be wise to allow religious fanatics to decide the future of this place of worship. The best course will be a settlement reached by a dialogue between the leaders of the two communities or a court decision should settle the issue. Ayodhya or any other religious dispute is a pointer to the weakness of our secularism. The law can keep a multireligious nation like ours united only up to a point. But what matters ultimately is the attitude of the people and political parties to religion. Unless we believe that religion is a personal matter in which politics or any other sphere of public life should not be dragged, the much needed communal harmony cannot be brought about. Let not India lose its soul on account of the fanaticism of some die-hards.

Iran

Hashemi-Rafsanjani Congratulates Gorbachev

LD2308175391 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani's message to Mr. Gorbachev, the president of the Soviet Union, was handed over to Mr. Rogachev, deputy foreign minister of that country, during a meeting with our country's ambassador to the USSR. According to the Central News Unit, the president congratulated Mr. Gorbachev and the Soviet people and expressed his pleasure at the return of law and order to that friendly neighboring country. He also wished Mr. Gorbachev success in carrying out his reformist policies and objectives. Furthermore, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani expressed the hope that strategic relations between the two countries will expand.

In response, Mr. Rogachev said: We need good relations with friendly countries, especially our neighbors. The ruling political trend in the foreign policy of our country is the expansion of relations and cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

President, Khamene'i on Government Issues

LD2508171791 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1010 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Remarks by President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani and Ayatollah 'Ali Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic Revolution, at a meeting with cabinet ministers in Tehran on 25 August—recorded]

[Excerpts] [Hashemi-Rafsanjani] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. We are very thankful to the honorable leader who gave the cabinet ministers the opportunity to meet with his eminence and benefit from his remarks.

I see, in practice, that the cabinet members are a suitable group. They cooperate with each other with a sincere, friendly, and caring attitude. As a group working in the cabinet, we see almost no problem in cooperating with each other. Issues are raised very clearly there. Opinions are expressed very frankly. The exchanges of ideas are very healthy. The kind of disputes that one sees outside, in the media and in other places, in which positions are adopted that belong to a particular line or wing or faction, do not in fact exist in the cabinet. The important issues there are work, service, and the removal of obstacles.

I am aware that ministers have many problems in performing their duties. They try to do their work and not leave the work for others to do. So far, I am satisfied with the performance of our ministers and their deputies. Of course, when I say I am satisfied, it is with reference to the existing resources and conditions. That is, what one would like to do is different from what we are doing now. There are some limitations there.

All the guidelines that your eminence gave in that meeting with the authorities of the nation were constructive lessons. We wanted these issues to be brought up in society so that they may be supported by public opinion and implemented. We think that they are workable and they are our wish. We always used your support and advice in the government.

During the private meetings that I have with your eminence, I have discovered that you are very aware of the details of executive work, you are more aware of them than I am. [passage omitted]

This is the season of service. Yesterday I gave a short report to the press and media on the work of the government. However, that was a small picture of the work done. There is much more to be said. I hope the gentlemen find time to inform the people during Government Week. When we described our work, one of the newspapers asked: Well, why don't you tell the people? Why is there no system to keep the people up to date with daily affairs? I accepted this criticism of the government. We have thought about this but were too busy with day to day work. Of course, Mr. Khatami, Islamic guidance minister, must help us in our public relations and strengthen the public relations of the government so that the people are aware of affairs.

After my speech last night, the gentlemen had almost no questions to ask. That is, if they had intended to ask questions before, after listening to my remarks they found the answers to their questions and realized there was no need for any more questions. We always wish to discuss these issues more, and now your eminence can help us to finish this discussion too. I do not wish to take any more of your time. It would be much more useful to listen to your eminence.

[Khamene'i] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. First, I would like to honor the memory of martyrs Raja'i and Bahonar. [passage omitted] I wish to explain two or three points on the work of the executive departments. The first point is the supervision of the system under your control. The machine of bureaucracy is a strange thing. Even you and I, after 10 or 12 years of experience in executive work, do not yet recognize bureaucracy. We only know bureaucracy in the description offered by others: that is, by those who describe the notorious 50-year, 60-year, or 100-year bureaucracies. Their descriptions correspond with our situation in many instances.

The executive machine, while being a necessary machine, would turn into something dangerous if you were to ignore its maintenance. The executive system is the thing which can help to reach your objectives easily and quickly. Without the executive system, which acts as your hands, you cannot reach any objective. On the other hand, the same machine can prevent you from realizing your objectives for ever; that is, as long as it wishes. It all depends on the structure of this complex mechanism; even more important, it depends on your supervision of it. If you were to supervise this machine and maintain it, it would carry out your orders. Otherwise if you were to neglect it, it would become your master; and no matter how good you are, you would not be able to manage it. Often there is a firm policy on which much stress is laid. Often the manager in charge of a project—that is, a minister and the lower hierarchy—might have stamped the project and reiterated the importance of its implementation, but still one man can prevent its implementation. All of you, who have served in the executive system for some time, would confirm this statement. Even those who have had nothing to do with the executive system can confirm this. I mean that those who are in touch with the executive system as clients understand this problem. That is, they see an order has been issued by the government and the relevant minister has issued instructions for its implementation, but the work is still not done.

The problem resembles a huge water canal system, where the water is pumped into the canal from the source, but no water comes out of the other end. It might be just a small pebble which has blocked the canal. The solution to this problem lies in your supervision. We cannot say you must employ all the pious individuals. It is impossible to make certain that 1,000, 2,000, or 10,000 of your colleagues meet your criteria. Let us suppose that you even succeed in finding such individuals, can you guarantee that good individuals would remain good for ever? Are the good people not affected by temptations?

What guarantees your success is the time you spend on supervision. That is, a good manager should perhaps allocate half of his time to supervision and the other half to other matters. You should always show your presence to check and inquire about various undertakings. You should pursue matters. This is also part of your supervision. That was one of the points I wished to explain and I would like to ask the gentlemen to regard this matter seriously. As Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani mentioned, I have wholeheartedly felt the difficulties of executive work. I realize this is your big problem. There are many things you wish to do, but they cannot be done.

Take heed of reports, be sensitive to them. People must discover this sense within them: they must learn to appreciate the right point in the report as soon as the report arrives. [passage omitted] The most important point is this: Be prepared to confront wrongdoings everywhere. I believe this is the first important point. Side by side with this, the second most important point is this: You must learn to create an atmosphere of sincerity and friendship. After all, you are well known in this system, you have passed the test with flying colors. [passage omitted]

Seek out faithful and sincere forces. Of course, this has nothing to do with the famous expertise commitment argument. This concerns experts. We are not saying: Go to the mosque and bring the one who is good at prayer. Find the sincere, committed, and pious elements among those who can do the work so that those close to you may continue to trust you. [passage omitted]

We all believe in one principle and we have announced it many times: hard work for the elimination of poverty and deprivation in society and support and assistance for the oppressed and deprived classes. This is where the judgement lies, this is the issue we should follow. [passage omitted]

With initiative, we can improve our work to a certain extent. For example, imagine this: If we decide that certain sectors are especially important, let us raise their priority for a limited time. Take agriculture: It is a very important sector in our system. Of course, I am not sure this section is given the high priority that it deserves. This is what can be done with planning: put aside six months, a year, and concentrate on agriculture: it should take priority over all other work. Even industry would be at the service of agriculture, cash can be diverted to agriculture. [passage omitted]

Currently the extent of arrogant propaganda is quite massive. The enemies of nations and enemies of Islam are brawling louder than ever. You all see for yourselves America's domination over world affairs; or it is better if we say that you all witness America's interference in world affairs. Nations in many parts of the world are disappointed with their officials and their governments. They are facing despair.

The problem of Palestine, for which America has currently assigned itself to be its flagbearer, is in fact a great tragedy for Muslims throughout the world and particularly the Middle East.

In opposition to such drunken brawling and offensive propaganda, genuine human determination and courage, and bravery inspired by a solid belief, should show themselves somewhere. Currently the Islamic Republic, God Almighty be praised, has the capacity and courage, and enjoys the support of nations.

The more confident you are and the harder you work in various political, economic, technical, and other fields, the weaker and more isolated will the enemy become, and it will be further distanced from its intentions.

God willing, the Almighty will assist all of you and your services will be accepted by the Lord of the Age; he will pray for you. God willing the immaculate soul of the imam of the ummah [Khomeyni] will be satisfied with you.

Peace be to you and God's blessing be upon you.

President on Hostages, 'Government Week'

LD2408115191 Tehran IRNA in English 0836 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Tehran, Aug. 24, IRNA—President Akbar Hashemi- Rafsanjani today reiterated that Israel was the main obstacle on the way of release of the Western, Lebanese as well as Iranian hostages held in Lebanon and in the occupied Palestine.

Speaking at a news conference here, the president said the West did not want the hostage question to be resolved. "Presently there are 300 to 400 Lebanese being held in the prisons of the Zionist regime. They have been kidnapped from Lebanon and are treated as prisoners of war," he said.

Rafsanjani said he had no doubt that the U.S. had great influence on Israel. "But the United States is not using its influence for the release of the hostages. Therefore, we suspect the U.S. had great influence on Israel," he said, adding that "here the U.S. and Israel are under question."

The president who was speaking to a group of domestic reporters on the occasion of the Government Week (Aug. 23-28), also said the Lebanese captors of the Western hostages voluntarily freed two of them but no good-will was shown from the other side. "The problem lies with them (the other party). There is no problem on this side," he stressed.

On the contents of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's message for him after the failure of the coup d'etat, Hashemi-Rafsanjani said it was a friendly message. The message, he said, stressed that law will be restored to the country, disorder will be countered and all foreign agreements will remain in force. It also mentioned expansion of mutual ties, he said. "My message to Mr. Gorbachev too was something similar," the president said.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani in a message to Gorbachev congratulated him on the return of law and order to the Soviet Union and wished success for him in pursuing his reforms in the country.

"We are against the policy of coup d'etat in any country. It is the people's vote which should decide a country's fate," Hashemi-Rafsanjani said at the news conference.

On relations with Iraq, he said "for us the principle is to have relations with Iraq irrespective of who is ruling there. Iraq is our neighbor and its people are important to us. Moreover, there are holy (Shi'ite religious) sites in that country. We hope that these relations will gradually improve."

The Iraqi Deputy Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Majid al-Faysal arrived in Iran today (through Bakhtaran border in western Iran) to hold talks with Iranian officials.

He is to fly to Tehran this afternoon. He said in an interview with the IRAQ NEWS AGENCY that he would discuss the question of the POWs with the Iranian officials.

The president said Iraq had not yet admitted the presence of some Iranian POWs in that country. But he said Tehran was vigorously pursuing the implementation of the Security Council Resolution 598 which calls, among other things, for identification of the aggressor party in the eight-year-old Iraq-Iran war, its punishment and payment or war reparations to the wronged party. Iran has estimated one thousand billion dollars in damages in the war with Iraq.

He said a United Nations team had already visited war-torn areas in Iran and filed a report on the war reparations and after follow-up activities "we hope we will achieve some good results in this respect."

On the scheduled visit of French President Francois Mitterrand to Iran, Hashemi-Rafsanjani said it is due to take place according to the schedule if something unexpected does not come up. The visit, the—second by a Western president, is to take place in autumn. Earlier the Austrian President Kurt Waldheim visited Tehran.

On dispatching envoys to Arab and Islamic states with messages for his counterparts on the question of Palestine, he said "we still have not received all the answers. In these explicit messages, we have voiced our great concern regarding the question of Palestine. We have raised some proposals to solve the question. We are waiting for all the answers to see what we can do. What we are trying to achieve is to prevent the U.S. from deceiving the Palestinians."

President's adviser Ali Reza Moayyeri, Deputy Foreign Minister Hoseyn Sheykholeslam, and Oil Minister Gholam Reza Aqazadeh-Kho'i were dispatched to a number of Arab and Islamic states to deliver Hashemi-Rafsanjani's message to heads of these states.

On the performance of his young government (now in its third year), Hashemi-Rafsanjani said he was very happy with what had so far been done. "I can say with confidence that inflation has been curbed," He said adding that "but this does not mean we are not facing other problems. We have still a long way to go."

Among the significant steps taken by his government, Hashemi-Rafsanjani mentioned the end of the eight year war with Iraq which he described as a great victory. "The entire world admitted our victory in the best possible manner. We would not have been able to boast of this victory so much even if we had succeeded in occupying Iraq," he said.

Shortly before its invasion of Kuwait in August 1989, Iraq bowed to all Iranian terms for the end of the war, including withdrawal from occupied Iranian territories, repatriation of all POWs and accepting the 1975 Algiers accord which Baghdad said would not respect.

He also said the settlement of the hajj issue was another important problem overcome by his administration.

Iranian pilgrims were deprived from annual hajj pilgrimage for three consecutive years since 1987 when a peaceful rally by the pilgrims was turned to bloodshed by Saudi security forces. Over 400 pilgrims, mainly Iranians, were killed and many others wounded in the incident. Relations between Iran and Arabia were severed following this incident but restored this year following diplomatic efforts by the two sides. Over 115,000 Iranian pilgrims managed to attend this year's Hajj ceremony where they held "deliverance from pagans" rally.

Another achievement of the present government, as mentioned by Hashemi-Rafsanjani, was Iran's growing presence in the international political scene. He said Iran had succeeded in penetrating the fence erected around it but "we cannot claim that we have been able to completely shatter this wall as it is still there and stands strong."

He was referring to economic sanctions imposed on Iran as well as Washington's "vicious attempt" in refusing to unfreeze Iran's assets (billions of dollars) in the United States.

He said one should not be deceived by the propaganda that the West has halted its hostility towards Iran. "The French have still not paid us their debt. (Some of) our contracts with Britain, France and Germany have still not been implemented. This is despite the friendly relations we have with these countries. The Japanese declined to complete the petrochemical project although 85 percent of the work had been done. Our industrial needs are still there but they are not as severe as they were in the past."

Questioned on the Middle East arms control plan which also include Iran, the president replied he did not take the issue seriously. "I do not see any strong enforcement behind the plan. For instance, (it is not known) whether Israel will be disarmed practically or whether the U.S. will accept this," he added.

On the achievements of his government in various fields, Hashemi-Rafsanajni said in light industries, the production increase ranged from four percent to as high as 800 percent. In the mining sector, he said, aluminium production rose from 25,000 tons in 1368 (ended March 1990) to 66,000 tons a year later. The output of copper inside the country stood at 76,000 in 1368, 92,000 in 1369 and 93,000 tons in the first four months of the current calendar year, he said.

The president also put the production of steel over the past three years at 1.6 million tons in 1368, 1.9 million tons in 1369 and 831,000 tons in the first four months of the current year. He said the figure is expected to rise to three million tons annually by next March considering the pace of growth in the output of the Ahavaz and Mubarakeh steel mills.

Pointing to the progress in the agricultural field, Hashemi-Rafsanjani said "to date, nearly 2.6 million tons of wheat has been purchased from farmers which is more than that of previous years. The stock at our silos is sufficient and unprecedented."

On cultural and educational activities, he said "our universities are to admit 200,000 students this year of whom 130,000 will study at governmental institutes and 70,000 in non-governmental (private) institutes." Some 14,000 new classrooms have been built and tuition fees waived, he added.

Elsewhere in his press conference, Hashemi-Rafsanjani said his government has managed to curb its budget deficit so much so that it sharply fell to rials 6,000 billion last year. The defict for this year is the same as predicted in the five year development plan, he added.

On the measures taken by his government to remove the problems of the deprtived strata of the society, the president said "some 5,200 projects are being implemented in the deprived areas and 170 billion rials have been earmarked for the purpose."

On efforts to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor, he said in 1365 (March 1986, March 1987) half of the incomes earned by the private sector was in the hands of 20 percent of the propulation, while today the figure stands at 48 percent.

UN Envoy Discusses Efforts To Release Hostages

LD2308201491 Tehran IRNA in English 1425 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] United Nations, New York, Aug. 23, IRNA—One reason behind Iran's participation in the humanitarian efforts to secure the release of all the hostages is to learn of the fate of four Iranians held in Lebanon, Iran's U.N. ambassador told IRNA here Friday. Ambassador Kamal Kharrazi described the four Iranian hostages, inclduing two diplomats as the "first victims of hostage taking" in the world. Nine years ago, Iran's charge d'affaires to Beirut Mohsen Musavi, as well as Ahmad Motevasselian, diplomat; Kazem Akhavan, IRNA's photojournalist; and Taqi Rastegar Moqaddam, an Embassy staffer were kidnapped by Lebanese Phalangists at Barbara checkpoint on the Tripoli-Beirut road and ever since nobody has heard of them.

"Contrary to Western mass media claims," Kharrazi said, "Iran is not stage-managing the release of hostages held in Lebanon. Rather, the main decision-makers are Lebanese groups."

He said the Lebanese groups had sent a letter to U.N. chief Javier Perez de Cuellar asking him to make necessary arrangements for the freedom of all the hostages. Despite the good-will shown by the Lebanese resistance groups in freeing some of the hostages unconditionally, it is the Quds occupying regime that should be blamed for the stalemate in the hostage freeing process.

"The freedom of Lebanese and Palestinian Muslims from the prisons of the Zionist regime could have led to the continuation of the process concerning the release of the hostages but at present the Zionists link the issue to the fate of their war prisoners in Lebanon," he said.

He also ruled out reports alleging that the four Iranian hostages have been martyred, saying "we have no evidence in support of such a claim. Their fate must certainly be clarified in the course of the release of the hostages."

Elsewhere in his interview, Kharrazi refuted reports that Iran's efforts to secure the release of the hostages was due to the economic bottlenecks it was facing and in order to come close to the West.

"As a matter of fact, Iran pays more attention to the humanitarian aspect of the issue because it is the first victim of hostage taking in the world. We are both after the determination of the fate of our hostages and the release of our brethren-in-faith held in occupied Palestine," he said.

Iraqi Envoy Arrives To Discuss 'Mutual Issues'

LD2508011391 Tehran IRNA in English 1242 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Tehran, Aug. 24, IRNA—Iraqi Deputy Foreign Minister Sa'd 'Abd-al-Majid al-Faysal reached Tehran today, and was received by his Iranian counterpart Manuchehr Mottaki. "We will discuss various mutual issues with Iranian officials," said al- Faysal, the first Iraqi official to visit Iran after several months of cold relations between the two neighbours following the Persian Gulf war last February and the subsequent mass uprising in Iraq, which resulted in the destruction of the holy shrines and massacres of thousands of people. He expressed hope that his visit would lead to "further understanding and mutual trust" between the two countries. Al-Faysal declined to comment on the repatriation of the remaining Iranian POWs, however, he implied that he would take up the issue in his talks with the Iranian officials. The Iraqi official and his delegation arrived in the western border city of Bakhtaran by land earlier in the day.

Iraqi Aircraft Discussed

NC2608053191 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0330 GMT 26 Aug 91

[Text] During the second and third round of talks between our deputy foreign minister for international affairs and the Iraqi deputy foreign minister, the two sides discussed the dredging of Arvand Rud [Shatt al-'Arab], the demarcation of border points, the exchange of prisoners of war and the missing in action, as well as the return of Iraqi civilian aircraft.

On the basis of the agreement between the heads of the two delegations, a committee of experts to study the POW's situation and another committee to study the situation and the return of Iraqi refugees in Iran and Iranian citizens in Iraq were formed and started their work.

Habibi Views Talks

LD2608104691 Tehran IRNA in English 0916 GMT 26 Aug 91

[Text] Tehran, Aug. 26, IRNA—A senior Iranian official here Monday said "there are numerous common interests" between Iran and Iraq and expressed hope the current visit to Tehran of Iraqi Deputy Foreign Minister Sa'd 'Abd-al-Majid al-Faysal "will provide a good prelude for improvement of bilateral relations." Speaking at his weekly press conference, first vice president and government spokesman Hasan Habibi told reporters, "we will demonstrate goodwill in our talks with the Iraqi delegation and if results are positive, the talks will continue." Habibi was referring to the ongoing talks between the Iranian officials and the Iraqi delegation which arrived in Tehran Saturday afternoon to discuss among other things the issue of the Iraqi prisoners of war in Iran, border demarcation and dredging of Shatt al-Arab on Iran-Iraq border. The government spokesman stressed that Iran had never halted negotiations with Iraq and only in one period the trend had slowed down. Habibi undersocred maintenance of friendly ties between the two nations and added that the release of the Iranian POWs still held in Iraq will be among topics of discussion with the Iraqi delegation. He expressed hope that talks will be productive. As for Syria's stand vis-a-vis the Hezbollah of Lebanon, the spokesman noted that the issue had been openly discussed with the Syrian officials who stressed that activities of Hezbollah as a Muslim revolutionary group will continue. The Syrian officials are of the idea that the revolutionary activities of Hezbollah must not be halted, Habibi said.

On government programs to control prices, Habibi said the administration is due to carry out a price control program at a limited scope, adding that the plan is under study at the Commerce Ministry. He stressed that for the time being the administration has no plan to waive the subsidies and noted that if such a measure was put into practice, the effects on low income people will be compensated. Habibi told reporters that present high prices in the country are either real, artificial or the result of vicious propaganda. Artificially created high prices, he said, are the products of hoarders and black marketeers while price hikes of certain items are caused by propaganda.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani Said Planning 'Military Coup'

TA2608081491 (Clandestine) Iran's Flag of Freedom Radio in Persian 0330 GMT 25 Aug 91

[Text] We have received accurate information from reliable sources inside the regime indicating that Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani intends to stage a military coup by which he aims to arrest and neutralize Ahmad Khomeyni, Mohtashemi, Karrubi, supporters of Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i, and all his opponents and dissolve the Majles. These sources have disclosed that one of the army's senior commanders, who held a very sensitive position before the revolution and who disappeared for a while after the revolution and surfaced in Paris, is secretly assisting Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani in preparing the coup plan. This officer has tried to contact some former army officers in this connection and obtain their consent for implementing Hashemi-Rafsanjani's coup plan.

We have learned that Hashemi-Rafsanjani intends to also use Palestinian and Libyan elements in implementing his plan. His pretext for staging the coup is to put an end to the present turmoil and chaos which has enveloped the entire country.

Nepal & Bhutan

King, Premier Welcome Gorbachev's Reinstatement

BK2408061991 Hong Kong AFP in English 0522 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Kathmandu, Aug 24 (AFP)—Nepal's King Birendra sent a message to Mikhail Gorbachev welcoming his reinstatement as president of the Soviet Union, state-run radio said Saturday.

"It is with a sense of relief that we have received the news that the attempt to dislodge a duly elected leader through unconstitutional means has been foiled in the Soviet Union," the radio quoted King Birendra as saying in his message.

"As a country committed to uphold democratic norms and ideals, we welcome this as a positive development," he said, adding that hoped for further strengthening of friendship between Nepal and the Soviet Union in future.

Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala welcomed Gorbachev's return to power in a separate letter Friday.

"Your return to the office symbolizes the power of the Soviet people and their strong desire for perestroika and glasnost" he said, referring to Gorbachev's policies of reforming orthodox communism.

"Because of our own experience of a long struggle for democracy, we feel sentimental affinity with those who are struggling for democracy and human rights" in the Soviet Union, he added.

Koirala also sent a letter to Boris Yeltsin, president of the Russian republic, applauding his role in returning Gorbachev to office after the coup by communist hardliners.

Civil Servants End 56-Day Agitation, Fast

BK2408143491 Hong Kong AFP in English 1358 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] Kathmandu, Aug 24 (AFP)—Civil servants on Saturday ended their 56-day industrial action here and called off a hunger strike by four colleagues, a union official said.

"Even after 56 days of our agitation, the Nepali Congress democratic government did not show any of its moral responsibility to solve the problem of the hard-pressed civil servants," a spokesman for the Nepal Civil Servants' Organization (NCSO) Rajan Dawadi said.

"Our main concern today is to save the lives of our four colleagues on hunger strike to press the Koirala government to fulfill our four major demands", Dawadi said.

He said the civil servants were "tired of fighting with this immoral government."

The leftist-backed civil servants are pressing for improved salaries and allowances.

During the stoppages, more than 2,000 civil servants have been suspended, more than 200 have lost their jobs and 800 are facing prosecution under the public offence act, the spokesman said, adding that more than 100 are being detained.

Pakistan

Fundamentalists Threaten To Besiege U.S. Embassy

BK2508093891 Lahore THE NATION in English 25 Aug 91 p 3

[Text] Lahore—Khatme Nabuwat [Finality of Prophethood] Youth Force workers took out a procession from the Masjid-e-Shuhada on Friday to protest against alleged interference of US diplomats in the internal affairs of Pakistan and threatened to besiege the U.S. Embassy if the Ministry for Internal Affairs did not take serious notice of visits by U.S. diplomats to Qadianis' holy place of Rabwah.

The protesters blocked the Mall Road for over two hours.

The speakers asserted that the Qadianis and the U.S. were involved in leakages of classified material relating to Pakistan's nuclear installations.

President Stresses 'Friendly' U.S. Ties

BK2408113091 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] President Ghulam Ishaq Khan has reiterated Pakistan's desire to maintain friendly relations with the United States without compromising national interests. He was talking to the outgoing U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Robert Oakley, who paid a farewell call on him in Islamabad today. The president appreciated Mr.

Oakley's efforts to improve understanding between the two countries on various issues despite differences and perceptions and hoped that the United States would realize Pakistan's difficulties and appreciate its point of view.

Soviet Changes Not To Obstruct Afghan Peace

BK2608063591 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 26 Aug 91 pp 1, 10

[By Ashraf Hashmi]

[Text] ISLAMABAD, Aug 25—The rapid developments taking place in Soviet Union as a result of the failed coup, though serious in nature, would have no adverse affect on efforts to resolve the Afghan issue. They could even provide an impetus to the ongoing process for a political settlement of the crisis, said a spokesman of the Foreign Office.

Foreign Secretary Sheharyar Khan said here on Sunday that though the Soviet leaders at present were engaged in serious internal constitutional problems but changes taking place there were in no way against the resolution of the Afghan dispute.

The spokesman said the second round of the trilateral Afghan talks would take place in Tehran from Aug 27 to 29. A special plane, taking the Pakistan delegation and about 30 representatives of the Pakistan-based Afghan groups and parties, would leave Islamabad on the morning of Aug 27.

The Pakistan delegation, which would be led by the secretary general foreign affairs, Akram Zaki, will include some of the Foreign Office officials and representatives of the Inter Service Intelligence (ISI). The Afghan delegation in the second round would consist of the same parties and groups which took part in the first round of deliberations held in Islamabad.

After arrival in Tehran the Afghan delegation will have meetings with the Iranian officials and the members of the Iran based mojahedin.

The spokesman said that Pakistan's efforts in the second round would be to carry forward the process where it was left after the first round in Islamabad. It may be mentioned here the Islamabad talks largely revolved around Perez de Cuellar five-point formula on Afghanistan.

Describing the first round of tripartite conference as fruitful the spokesman said this was followed by bilateral talks between Pakistan and the Soviet Union. He said as a result of series of these negotiations all relevant parties to the issue, Pakistan, Iran, Soviet Union and the mojahedin groups and parties have come closer to each other with regard to their understandings of various clarifications sought about the five point formula presented by the UN secretary general.

Sheharyar Khan while commenting on his recent visit to India said he went there as a special emissary of the prime minister [PM] and his mission was in no way related to the forthcoming foreign secretaries-leval talks due to be held between the two countries next month.

He said the special message of the prime minister to the Indian premier was aimed at bringing a permanent peace between the two nations which have suffered for 40 years due to conflicts, confrontations and wars resulting in colossal waste of their resources. The prime minister message emphasized that the time has come that the old chapter of animosity and confrontation should be closed and the two sides should settle all outstanding issues across the table and not across the border.

He said his meetings with the Indian prime minister, the foreign minister and minister of defence were useful during which he conveyed the feelings expressed by the prime minister in his letter.

Describing the Indian response to the PM message as positive, he said, the results, of these efforts depended on events taking place in future. He said as a result of his recent visit to New Delhi a firm date of secretary level talks between the two countries had been fixed from September 18 to 21 in Islamabad. All issues, small or big, he said would be taken up in these talks which also included the problem of Kashmir. He admitted there was no change in the known position of the two countries on Kashmir yet the issue has to be resolved.

Apart from the secretary level talks the two prime minister, he said, are scheduled to meet at Colombo and Harrare in October and November this year. These one-to-one contacts between the two he said would help build a tempo of reconciliation.

He said he did not carry any specific proposals to Delhi. His mission was to hand over the message of the prime minister to the Indian prime minister and convey the feelings of goodwill to the Indian leaders.

Sri Lanka

President Expresses 'Happiness' for Gorbachev

BK2308112191 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] President Ranasinghe Premadasa has expressed happiness that the democratic forces within the Soviet Union have ensured the continuance of Mikhail Gorbachev as president. He has conveyed to Mr. Gorbachev the great satisfaction of the people and the Sri Lankan Government in this regard. The president says that as a country committed to democracy, Sri Lanka watched with admiration steps taken by the Soviet leader to democratize the political process and liberalize the economy of the Soviet Union. He points out that Sri Lanka and the Soviet Union enjoy very close and cooperative relationship which will grow stronger in the years to come. The president has extended all good wishes for Mr. Gorbachev's personal well-being and success in the future.

LTTE Expresses Readiness for Direct Peace Talks

BK2408031491 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] In Sri Lanka, the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of tamil Eelam] has expressed its readiness to stop war and resume the peace talks. Addressing a group of journalists at the LTTE headquarters Kondavil, the political adviser of the LTTE, Mr. Balasingham, said that the Tigers are ready for the talks if the tourism and rural industries minister, Mr. S. Thondaman, goes to Jaffna. Mr. Balasingham said the LTTE offer follows a recent meeting between the emissary of Mr. Thondaman and the LTTE leaders in Jaffna.

Our Colombo correspondent reports that this is the first direct offer for talks by the LTTE in the last one year.

Minister Welcomes LTTE Offer

BK2408075891 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0730 GMT 24 Aug 91

[Text] The Sri Lankan tourism and rural industries minister, Mr. Thondaman, has welcomed the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] offer of peace talks. He told our Colombo correspondent this morning that the LTTE and the Sri Lankan Government should sit together to sort out the problem in the Northeast. Mr. Thondaman said that the Parliament Select Committee will discuss the LTTE offer shortly and the next move toward peace talks will depend on the outcome of the meeting.

Official Details Situation at Elephant Pass

BK2308120991 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 23 Aug 91

[Text] Troops of the Operation Balawegaya are further strengthening their defenses and enlarging the areas of control at the Elephant Pass camp. The troops have also consolidated their positions in the area. Colonel Sarat Munasinghe of the army headquarters, briefing newsmen on the security situation at yesterday's weekly news conference at the parliamentary complex in Kotte, said that from the center of the camp troops are consolidating themselves a four-km radius northwest and south of the Elephant Pass camp. The security forces have gained control in the areas along Vettilaikerni.

Responding to a question raised by newsmen, Col. Munasinghe said that the government troops are maintaining sufficient strength in the Elephant Pass to counter any attack of the terrorists. He noted that helicopters are landing freely at the Elephant Pass camp and supply is being done by air. Col. Munasinghe made it clear that unless the target is confirmed by the intelligence services, the forces will not bomb any position.

He pointed out that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] is militarily weakened to a greater extent, mainly because supply through India has almost stopped following the stern action taken by the Indian authorities. Escape [word indistinct] through the Indian border has also been stopped. Col. Munasinghe said that the order of the LTTE leader, Prabhakaran, to capture the Elephant Pass camp proved to be a failure.

Answering a question raised by newsmen regarding the negotiations for peace with the LTTE, Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe reiterated that the government always supports peace. Cabinet spokesman Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe pointed out that many opposition parties and several other political parties are prepared for peace talks. He reminded that the president soon after victory in the battle for Elephant Pass called the LTTE for peace negotiations. The LTTE never heeded several requests for negotiations. The minister categorically stated that the doors are always open for peace talks. He made it clear that there should be a party to negotiate with and there should be response from the party that is fighting—whether it is with condition or without condition.